Our Own Church

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OUR OWN CHURCH

BY

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PREFATORY.

THE words which fill the pages of this little volume are for young Christians—for young Methodist Episcopal Christians—and have been written to promote among them a thoughtful and lively and growing interest in their own Church, its history, doctrines, government, polity, and usages.

We want a Church made up of Christlike and loyal Christians, who first of all love and worship and serve Christ; who at the same time truly love all who love Christ, whatever their denominational lines, and who also love well, loyally, and always their own denomination, and stand by it and stand up for it; being true to it when it is popular, and just as true when, for any reason, it does not meet the favor of the multitude.

Young Methodist Episcopalians must be broad, liberal, generous, and catholic-spirited, while they are firm, fervent, steady, and uncompromising in their devotion to the Church they belong to—the Church which, to be at its best, must as fully as possible reproduce the doctrines, spirit, usages, and conduct of the Church of the first century. A Methodist should aim to be a "first century Christian" in this period of history which witnesses the closing of the nineteenth and the opening of the twentieth Christian century.

JOHN H. VINCENT.

EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE,
BUFFALO, N. Y., *March* 21, 1890.

OUR OWN CHURCH.

I.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints."—*Apostles' Creed.*

HERE are words of greeting, welcome, and counsel to the candidate for membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church!

You have "joined the Church." You are now a "probationer." In six months, if you and the Church agree, you may become a "full member." By a gradual process you thus approach that great and divine institution—the CHURCH—which God, who made the earth and the heavens, established; the CHURCH—composed of souls redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; the CHURCH—which begun in the early days of the race and has continued through all the ages; the CHURCH—the "house of the

living God," which he built and blesses, and where he abides: the CHURCH—"the pillar and ground of the truth," upholding, proclaiming, distributing, defending, and administering that truth for the good of men and the glory of God.

You have joined the "Holy Catholic Church." In the Creed you professed at your baptism you say: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." Remember, this is not the *Roman* Catholic Church. It is the "HOLY Catholic Church." And there is a vast difference between the two—all the difference that there is between a gayly decorated Christmas-tree and the old oak that grows by the way-side, deep-rooted, wide-spreading; giving shade in the summer; holding a heart of life in the winter that no frosts can destroy; with nesting-nooks for birds, and perches for their hours of song; the old oak that takes firm hold of the soil and that sweeps the heavens; the oak with dew and song and sunshine on it, with memories of the long ago, and with promise for the centuries to come.

Never let the gewgaws and glimmer and sweets of the Christmas-tree delude you. There

may be, indeed, beautiful green leaves on it. The life has not all gone; but its doom is certain. The Roman Catholic Church is a relic of paganism and of tyranny, with some good doctrine in it, but so overloaded with tissue-paper and candles and glass baubles that one who knows what the living tree is grows tired of the dead, and longs for the life and strength and beauty of the grand old oak of the ages—"the Holy Catholic Church," where are blossom and shade and fruit and blessing.

The Holy Catholic Church embraces every thing that is "true" in all the ages of Christian history, in all the phases of Christian worship, in all the schemes of Christian theology, in all the plans of Christian work.

The Holy Catholic Church embraces all the truly good Christians of all ages, of all the schools, of all the nations, and of all the denominations. The real martyrs of the early centuries in Rome, Asia, and Egypt; the true preachers, and the so-called "priests" of the Roman and of the Greek Churches, who sincerely served God; the faithful few in the household of

Cæsar, among the valleys of Switzerland, in the monasteries of England, or in the mountains of Scotland; the honest servants of Jesus Christ among all the numberless "communions"—the Presbyterians, the Protestant Episcopalians, the Romanists, the Greek Catholics, the Reformed Churches, the Baptists, the Methodists of all classes—these, and all who every-where else, in the best way they can, worship God in the name of Jesus Christ, are members of the Holy Catholic Church. The patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles and saints of the New, the real saints of the early and the middle and the later ages, the Augustines and the San Bernards and Savonarolas, and the Calvins and Luthers, the Knoxes and Wesleys—these, all of them, were members of the Holy Catholic Church.

And beyond, in the realm above, where apostles and martyrs are, where Jesus is made manifest and his people serve him, where "mother" is, and dear old "father" and the "children," where "before the throne they serve their Maker day and night," and sing halleluiahs—

there, too, is a part of the Holy Catholic Church of which you are now a member.

Glorious body of Christ! strong and true; apostolic and universal; full of charity and good-will; resplendent in history with deeds of heroes who counted not their lives dear unto them so that they might win Christ; radiant with the glory of his presence who dwells among his people, giving them peace and filling their hearts with love.

Into this noble fellowship you have come, for in joining the Methodist Episcopal Church you join a branch of the Holy Catholic Church which recognizes the whole body of Christ, and seeks to bless and help all, and enjoys communion and fellowship with all.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has no "canons" which exclude true ministers of Jesus Christ of other Churches from its pulpits. It has no dogma of "apostolic succession" which limits the privileges of the ministry to a small and exclusive class. It has no "regulations" which render it impossible or difficult to fraternize in Church service and Church work with other Christians. Its members belong to *the Holy*

Catholic Church—the broad, large, full, liberal, great-hearted Church that Christ established.

Take the Protestant Episcopal Church, in contrast—a Church organized after the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with a much smaller membership; a branch of the Church in which there are, indeed, devout and faithful Christians. But, with singular pretentiousness, it claims to be *the* Church. Its canons refuse to allow clergymen of other denominations in its pulpits. It gives instructions to its young people which cultivate in them a spirit of exclusiveness which we believe to be opposed to the teachings of our Lord. I do not impeach the perfect sincerity of those who thus believe and teach, but I deprecate it.

Read, for example, the following questions and answers taken from the Catechism prepared by Dr. Morgan Dix, of New York, of Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church. These will give you a specimen of the teachings of that communion. True, there are men and women in the Church who do not accept these extreme views; but they submit to them, and dare not

call the rector to an account; and, moreover, they obey the canons which embody the spirit of the Trinity Catechism, and do not even seek to repeal them. They live by them, even if they do not believe them.

Question. Does it, then, make no difference if we belong to some independent Church or sect, and not to a true branch of the Catholic Church?

Answer. It makes all the difference between obeying and disobeying Christ.

Q. What is necessary to make any particular Church a true branch of the Catholic Church?

A. It must hold to the Creed of the Church, to the Apostolic Ministry, and to the Apostolic Sacraments.

Q. Is it, then, enough to keep only the *doctrine* of the apostles?

A. No; we must be also of the apostolic *fellowship.*

Q. How do we stay in the apostolic fellowship?

A. By staying in the fellowship of the bishops, their successors.

* * * * * *

Q. By whom, then, were sects founded?

A. By erring men; not by Jesus Christ.

In contrast with the Dix-Trinity Catechism, I quote from a little Catechism published by the Methodist Episcopal House, showing how much broader our own dear Church is in its views concerning the other branches of the Church of Christ:

Question. Is there more than one true Church of Jesus Christ?

Answer. There is but one true Church.

Q. Who belong to it?

A. All who believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ. These constitute the Holy Catholic Church.

Q. What does Paul call it?

A. "The whole family in heaven and earth." Eph. iii, 15.

Q. Has this one true Church more than one outward form?

A. It has many outward forms, usually called "denominations," such as the Baptist Church, the Congregational Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Reformed Episcopal Church, and many others.

Q. With which denomination or branch of the one Church of Christ are we connected?

A. With the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Let us love all branches of the Holy Catholic Church, and let us cultivate charity toward those whose views so widely differ from our own. And let us faithfully defend the faith delivered unto the saints and make our own the ardent loyalty of the poet:

"Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise."

II.

THE ANTIQUITY OF METHODISM.

"Among all nations . . . beginning at Jerusalem."

METHODISM is now nearly nineteen hundred years old. It began with the life of the Christ, whom it worships, and whose teachings and work in the world it perpetuates. We are not to be understood, of course, as claiming that the formal organization of the Methodist Episcopal branch of the Holy Catholic Church took place nineteen centuries ago, although we believe that the earliest form and life of the Church were more nearly like that of the Methodist Episcopal Church of to-day than of any other branch of the Church now existing; but it is not of the outward form we speak. Methodism is a spirit and a doctrine. Methodism is Christianity. Dr. Chalmers said, "Methodism is Christianity in earnest." It is that or nothing. There is nothing in it that was not in Christianity in the beginning. There was nothing essential in Christianity in the beginning that is not

in Methodism now. Its doctrines are the doctrines of Christ and of Paul. Its spirit is the spirit of Pentecost. Its methods are the methods of the apostolic Church—practical, far-reaching, wisely adapted to all peoples, the outgrowth of sound doctrine and of experimental piety.

Methodism, as we now consider it, is not a "sect," nor is it a "form," but a *spirit*. It is a life informing and employing a body of doctrine. See what New Testament doctrine, spirit, and activities are, and you have Methodism. Dr. Chalmers was right.

Methodism has existed through all the ages in those elements which constitute the individuality and power of the Church. It has not always been called Methodism, but it has always been Methodism. The ecclesiastical forms which it assumes depend upon the exigencies of society, and upon the practical wisdom of the leaders who attempt to meet these exigencies. Spirit, doctrine, and service may find place in old institutions, or they may develop new institutions. The reality, is not, however, in the institutions, but in the essentials of truth

and spirit by which the institutions are, for which they are, and without which they need not be. Fountains, with ample basins, jets, and decorations, are nothing without water. They are because of the water. Telegraphic posts and wires are worthless without the electric current. Ecclesiastical organizations are dead and useless things without doctrine and life.

Now Methodism makes little account of Church forms and Church government. It leaves it to the decaying ecclesiastical stone and brick and bronze fountain-forms of Rome and Canterbury to glorify such things. Methodism is doctrine and spirit—the essential, the permanent, the ancient, the apostolic, the divine elements of the Church.

Therefore Methodism is the most ancient life of the Church. Its continuity has never been broken. Its lines of descent are not corrupted by foul priests, profane and licentious bishops, the outrages of hierarchical power, the murders of inquisitions, the banter and sale of place and grace. Its succession is in the divine love and peace and strength which have come into hum-

ble and devout hearts—plebeian, priestly, and princely—who have yielded to the indwelling grace of God. False doctrine and foul hearts break the succession, the basis of which is not human or dependent upon the will of popes, bishops, and kings. The basis of the true succession is in the spiritual life—in the deep-flowing river of divine Love, and is independent of scepter and miter, of sword and coffer, of council and Vatican. Such is the glorious unimpeachable, imperishable, apostolic succession—this Christly succession of Methodism.

The true Church—"Christianity in earnest"—is a river flowing through all the centuries, spreading its healing waters in many streams all over the earth. How glorious was its success in the first century—how broad and deep and beautiful! Those were the days of a successful and jubilant Methodism. Read the records. Hear the shouts of triumph! See the ingathering of souls! Rejoice in the reports of those grand revivals! No swinging "censers," elevated "host," or lighted candles in those days; no elaborate ritualistic ceremonies, discussions

about "absolution," quarrels over cut and color of cassock, gown, and altar cloth. In those days the "word" and the "power" were all our Church cared for. People who emphasized in those days forms and successions and "endless genealogies" ridiculed the spontaneity, intensity, informality, and "confusion" of the abounding life. They called these primitive Methodists "fools" and "fanatics;" but the grand movement marched forward.

A century or so later formality gained ground. Later still the main current of that first outbursting stream sank out of sight in the arid deserts of ritualism, temporal ambition, greed of gain, and growth of hierarchical pretension. It swept on, indeed — an unbroken stream in hearts of unchurchly saints, hermits and monks, merchants and housewives—true souls, who despised the sham of the "Church," and rejoiced in the "shame" of the Gospel. And in later ages the grand river broke forth again, in the days of Luther, and in deeper, broader, stronger current in the days of Wesley. "Christianity in earnest"—the old Church force, the original

apostolic Church life again blessed the world. It filled the old channels, poured into some of the old fountains, washed their dust away, and caused them to flow and shine in crystal brightness and refreshing power. So full was the outbursting stream of the old Church life that it formed new channels and new fountains. The limitations of English Church prejudice and bigotry and worldliness, that refused to recognize the new outpouring of the old stream, could not restrain it. It gained daily and swept widely, and blessed every hamlet and city, and, in spite of the Established "Church," cut out new channels in England and America and the world over for its divine waters. All the Christian channel beds of the globe are fuller and deeper and wider to-day because of that new outburst of Methodism.

Old or new, every thing depends upon the stream. The new is, because of it, as old as the old, and the old is new again. But the ancient thing is the stream—not a few stones laid here and there through the centuries—not even the channels through which the stream flows, for

the best channels of old streams are often the new ones cut out by their resistless currents. Methodism is doctrine and spirit—Christianity, "Christianity in earnest," and is the most ancient element in the Church of Christ on the planet to-day.

All these things have been said of that Holy Catholic force — Methodism, and not of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is only one, a very large one, to be sure, but only one of the many channels divinely formed by the powerful stream of "Christianity in earnest." The Methodist Episcopal Church is one development of Methodism—large, practical, spiritual, successful, and full of catholic spirit, aiming to do good to all, and ready to pour its waters into other fields to irrigate them, and into other streams to augment them.

Let its broad, apostolic, beautiful, and benign ministry continue, and let its members rejoice in the antiquity and divinity of its doctrine, spirit, and methods!

Our Church glories, therefore, in its apostolic and pentecostal antecedents, and in its divine

succession. It has no sympathy with the dogma of a literal "apostolic succession," * as that theory is held and advocated to-day by representatives of a "visible Church" which claims to have the episcopacy as a third "order" from the apostles. We repudiate it.

Our "succession" is a stainless, spotless, unbroken succession of truth and grace—God's truth, God's grace—a succession that flows on uncorrupted through the ages, independent of popes, bishops, and councils; flowing from "the river of life," flowing on and ever. Glorious succession! Glorious Church! Let us be glad and grateful that our lot is cast among a people so free from bondage to ecclesiasticism and ritualism and vain devices of evil men, who, in dark ages, wore robes and miters, and ruled souls of men with rods of iron.

* See Appendix.

III.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

ONE of the temptations to which, in these days, our young Methodist Episcopal people are exposed, is the attempt to allure them from their own communion by the specious and carnal arguments based upon social standing, ecclesiastical antiquity, and æsthetic service, in certain other Churches. They are invited to the "sociables." They are called upon and shown marked attentions by "society" people. They are invited to parties where the laxities of fashionable life, under most genial guise, are brought into contrast with the more limited provision for amusements in conscientious and strict Church society. They hear mild jokes at the expense of "Methodists" who "oppose fun and fashion and frolic, and who would turn parlors into prayer-meeting rooms." This social sarcasm has its influence. Our young people

feel it, and sometimes fall under it. Or the venerable character of "THE Church" is quoted, and its splendid service, its "wealth" and "taste" and "best society" praised. All these considerations have their weight with young people.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is, in our judgment, the best representative on earth today of the original apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ. Therefore we belong to it. It is a Church of Christ, an integrant part of the one Holy Catholic Church. It recognizes all communions which recognize Christ as their Head.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is apostolic in its origin, in its doctrines, in its government, in its usages, in its spirit, in its work, in its success. It is established to spread scriptural holiness—*scriptural* holiness, not vagaries, flights, fanaticisms—but the holiness enjoined in the Word and illustrated by the saints.

Methodism embraces all classes of society. It began in the most cultured and honored circles of English society. It enrolls shepherds, fishermen, colliers, nobles, princes, and presidents.

It has found its way into palaces and into coal-pits. Refined and cultivated women have devoted themselves to its holy work, and enjoyed in elegant parlors delightful spiritual fellowship as they conversed on the things of the divine kingdom. Many eminent scholars, orators, statesmen, scientists, as well as plebeians, have been devoted Methodists. At its altars bow the lowly and the lofty—lowly all as they recognize the one God who is Father of all, the one Christ who is Saviour of all, the one Holy Spirit whose grace, like the sunlight, rests on lofty palm and cedar, and yet gives whiteness and fragrance to the lily of the valley.

The Methodist Episcopal Church glories in the profound philosophy, wisdom, and scriptural authority of its doctrines, in the wideness of the mercy it proclaims, and in the power of the grace it upholds. It forgets mere circumstance in its estimate of the worth of souls. It looks upon the lowliest of mortals, and remembers his immortal destiny. In humble places it visits and helps the poor and neglected, seeing, by the eye of faith, the day not far distant

when the garb of poverty shall be exchanged for the robes of the eternal city. Like its divine Founder, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Methodist Episcopal Church places great stress upon souls—souls that outweigh gold—souls that outshine diamonds — souls that outlast thrones—souls that shall live on when the stars perish.

The Methodist Episcopal Church holds up high standards of Christian life. It believes that the spirit of the world is opposed to the spirit of Christ. It believes that the society of the world is hostile in temper and tendency to the true society of the Church, which is the society of heaven among men. It, therefore, disapproves of worldly amusements, the associations and tendencies of which are downward. It requires all loyal communicants to deny themselves ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. The command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," is, with the Methodist Episcopal Church, a real command, and means what it says. While, on the one hand, it

denounces asceticism and the nonsense of the monastery and nunnery, it forbids indulgence in the follies of worldly society, and seeks to turn the thought of its members toward the higher realm of spiritual taste, true culture, Christ-like refinement, and literary attainment, in subordination to moral heroism, divine aspiration, and Christian joy. It distinguishes between sensuous society and rational society. The radical idea of the one is fleshly gratification, that of the other culture and character. It distinguishes between *selfish* society, which seeks "a good time," regardless of example and influence, and *Christian* society, which seeks the well-being of others, and makes large sacrifices for the good of others.

All this is, indeed, against "the world," and it is also against the spirit of those Churches (if such there be) and those social circles calling themselves Christian who care more for the world than for Christ.

In the days of the Son of man his disciples were exposed to precisely the same assaults of scorn and contempt which now greet those who

seek truly to follow him. The principles which influence men do not change. Truth is always the same. There is always an antagonism between truth and error, between right and wrong. It requires as much self-sacrifice now to be a Christian as in the early days of Christianity. The same old enemies exist and assail. The same old arguments are used. The same old courage is necessary. Times and fashions may change, but principles are eternal.

I imagine that I hear a young Jew of one of the "best families" in Jerusalem, in the days of the apostles, remonstrating against the devotion of young Christian disciples. "Ah!" says our young Jewish Churchman, "our system is sustained by the rich and the great. The old families with good blood and much gold and wide renown come to our services. Your Jesus was followed by beggars and represented by fishermen. He lived in a desert, had no residence on the best street, and no access to the best families."

So be it. And whether in the first century

or the nineteenth, the disciple of Christ must stand with him, even if the rich and great and noble are to be sacrificed.

I imagine I hear my Jewish ecclesiastic continue: "Our system is old; it dates back to the days of Levi and Aaron; the succession is unbroken. It is so grand to think as you look at the priest at the altar that he belongs to the ancient order! As for your Jesus, who is he? Have the high-priests ever recognized him? Has the oil been poured on his head? Does he wear priestly robes? Is he in the succession?" Just as old Jews talked in the days of Christ some of his nominal followers talk to-day. They talk about "priests" and "altars," "robes" and "ritual," "ancient usages" and exclusive prerogatives. They say, "We are the *true* Church. The rest of you are only 'sects.' You have no ordinations that are valid. We are the only people of God."

So be it. And in the nineteenth century, as in the first, the disciple of Christ must stand by him even if the figments of apostolic succession and ancient orders are utterly ignored. There is no

greater nonsense in all Church history than the claim of apostolic succession made, for example, by the Romish Church and by the Protestant Episcopal Church; and it is well that our young people understand, at the very outset, the very absurdity of it. Let us be followers of Christ instead of Aaron, followers of Christ instead of Judas, followers of Christ instead of Peter.

I imagine I again hear the young Jewish Churchman of the first century making his plea with the humble disciple of Christ: "Our system is liberal and free. You may stand well with us, and yet dance and play and live as you please. If you keep passover week, and observe the feast days, what does the rest of the year matter? In following the Nazarene you are limited and hedged in, required to deny yourself, and made a bondsman to conscience and duty. Your Jesus says: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life eternal. Deny thyself, and take up thy cross, and follow me.' But we have no such absurd restrictions.

We go to the temple; we observe the services; and then we live as we please. We don't let the doctrine or law of the Church interfere with our self-indulgence."

So be it. And in the nineteenth century, as in the first, the disciple of Christ must stand by him, even if the dance, the card-table, the theater, and the wine-glass must be given up, and the lines sharply drawn between the world and the Church, between those who live for present sensual gratification and those who live for the life eternal.

Again I hear the Jewish trifler, whose religion is an ideal and a form, exclaiming: "Our service is so elegant! We have no poor grammar in our prayers. Our chants are exquisite and rendered by trained musicians; our services according to ancient usage. We violate no law of taste. We conform to the highest standards. We are not interrupted by impertinent mendicants and lepers and lame men whose cries rend the air and mar the service. Your Jesus entered the city and came toward the temple the other day riding on an ass, and the common people and

even the children shouted in unliturgical order at his passage. In our service we have no such deviation from propriety."

So be it. And in the nineteenth century, as in the first, the disciples of Christ must stand by him even if noise and excitement and earnest desire sometimes break the silence of a public service, or afflict the morbid sensitiveness of people who care more for mode than matter, for taste than truth. We are not of this world. We must not be ruled by it.

Better the Church which brings the Gospel to souls longing after the life eternal; the Church founded by the Son of God, who came to give life eternal; the Church inspired by the Spirit of God, who is the source of life eternal, than a Church made up of nobles, princes, rich men and social magnates, to whom ministers dare not preach the plain words of the Gospel lest they lose place, salary, and reputation.

Better the Church that has its present connections with the exhaustless fountains of life eternal, yielding fresh supplies to-day from heavenly reservoirs, than a Church basing its claims

upon broken arches, dilapidated and waterless aqueducts stretching from empty reservoirs to dusty cisterns.

Better the Church that reiterates the words and retains the standards of the Lord Christ about self-denial, self-resistance, abandonment of the world and its lusts and pleasures, about love of God, love of men, and entire devotion to Him, than a Church that, for the sake of retaining giddy youth in its communion, justifies all indulgence, requires no self-sacrifice, chants sweet music and preaches "lovely sermons," utters æsthetic and classic prayers, thus uniting Christ and Belial—the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.

Better the Church that rings with the cry of beggars at the beautiful gate, of souls aglow with the divine life at Pentecost, of souls that know their sins forgiven, than a Church that, to serve propriety, sacrifices piety, and rebukes, as did the Pharisees of old, the hosannas of the children in the temple, or the halleluiahs of the disciples when the tongues of fire fell from heaven upon their heads.

Of this one thing you may be certain: You cannot make the "Church" and the "world" one. You cannot have all the strength and faith and hope and joy of living for others in the Christly way, and at the same time enjoy the pride and sensuality and scorn for the humble, and abandonment to pleasure, which characterize the world.

You must make a decision. You must stand up valiantly for the Church-life as against the world-life! You cannot play and feast under the enemy's flag and be accounted loyal soldiers of the great King.

Choose promptly. Put yourself into positive relations with Christ, and let the world understand you. Let your prayer be:

"Arm me with thy whole armour, Lord,
Support my weakness with thy might;
Gird on my thigh thy conquering sword,
And shield me in the threatening fight;
From faith to faith, from grace to grace,
So in thy strength shall I go on,
Till heaven and earth flee from thy face,
And glory end what grace begun."

I D.

IV.

BROAD AND NARROW.

"Give heed to . . . thy doctrine."

YOUNG Christian people are met in these days by the objection to the Evangelical Churches—Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, and others—that they are rigid and severe and narrow in their doctrines. To this objection I wish to give some attention.

It is easy to denounce positiveness of conviction, and the consistency of action which follows it, as unworthy and narrow; and it is equally easy to glorify laxity of faith and general indifference to doctrine, both in theory and policy, as broad, large, and noble.

The expulsion by the Conference of the Rev. Dr. —— from the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, some years ago, was the occasion for many harsh utterances by people, in and out of the Church, on the subject of "breadth"

and of "narrowness," of "liberality," "freedom of opinion," "freedom of speech," etc. Many honest souls were then, as they always will be, misled by specious and beguiling talk about "advanced ideas," "a new era," and "a new theology."

The writer of these lines gave at the time, through the columns of the New York "Independent," a view of the whole question, as suggested by the case—a view so highly commended by wise and good men in and out of the Church, that he has yielded to the suggestion to put the article into more permanent shape.

This is done without the slightest desire to reflect upon the character of Dr. —— himself, for whom, indeed, the writer has much respect and admiration, nor to revive an old Conference discussion, which would, certainly, be an unworthy aim; but to state, for the benefit of our intelligent young Methodist Episcopal people, who hear so much in these days about "liberality" and "breadth," the true philosophy of denominational opinions and administrations; to show who the truly "broad people" are, and to enter

protest against the frivolous and absurd claim that people "without fixed opinions" are the only progressive and liberal people of the age.

With this introduction I reproduce the letter with the humble hope that it may be of service to the numerous thinking youths of our great and growing Church:

Dr. —— has been expelled from the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The ministers, his peers, did it. They did it after a careful "investigation" by the presiding elder and after a complete "trial" by the Conference. They did it after years of patient waiting and forbearance. They did it legally, according to the prescribed regulations of the Church. They did it kindly, with no malice or bitterness, and with much generous sympathy for the offender. They gave him time, counsel, and the right to challenge every one of the fifteen jurors who constituted the "select number" before whom he was tried. There was nothing cruel or that savored of persecution; nothing bigoted or narrow in the act, or in the motive and manner thereof. It was done openly, for "good

and sufficient cause," in the spirit of love for the brother, and of loyalty to the cause of Christ.

This act of the —— Conference does not silence Dr. —— as a preacher of his own views. It does not close his lips as a public teacher. It does not deprive him of a "living." It does not impoverish him or his family. It is to him a great financial gain. It does not aim to "bring him to terms," or to modify his opinions against his own free-will. It does not seek to make him disloyal to his convictions. It simply denies him the right officially to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church. There is in this no "persecution" by the Conference. If there be persecution in the case at all, it is on the other side; for he who caricatures and thus misrepresents the doctrines of a party or a Church, holding them up to public contempt, is himself the persecutor.

The action of the Conference is a protest against the publication, under Church authority, of vague and unsettled opinions, and of personal doubts concerning the fundamentals

of evangelical theology. Every thoughtful man has doubts and anxieties concerning every question that touches human destiny and the relation of man to God. Personal assurance of divine verities is won only after struggle with doubt. But the Conference believes that the parading of private doubts by the pulpit is unwise and injurious. It believes that there is positive truth, on which the soul may rest implicitly even where the philosophy eludes its grasp. There is an evangelical school which accepts the whole Bible as from God, and believes in it as a supernatural revelation. Methodism believes this, and believes, moreover, in the easy possibility of a personal religious experience, and in the all-sufficiency of grace for all souls. Her distinctive usages—the class-meeting, the itinerant ministry, and the connectional scheme of government—are but outgrowths of her broad individual and experimental doctrines. She commissions her ministers to proclaim certainties and not doubts, doctrines and not speculations. Her ministers may privately struggle with the problems they encounter. They are

compelled to discuss these problems with inquirers who submit them; but they have no right publicly to disseminate them. To do so is either weak or wicked. As Prof. Robertson Smith wisely says: "I never introduce such questions into the pulpit. Positive truth—truth which can be proved, illustrated, applied—can be found sufficient to occupy all a minister's time in public instruction, and employ all his abilities in its illustration. Such positive truth, and such only, has power to turn men to righteousness, and to confirm and edify them therein."

Abraham Lincoln had, undoubtedly, many misgivings as to the prospects and policy of the administration, military and civil, during the Civil War. He spent many an anxious hour, and considered many a serious question which he never gave to the public. Indeed, to have published a tithe of his fears would have been worse than disloyalty. Dr. —— seems to be uncertain and unsettled. Instead of waiting, reading, thinking, conversing with his peers and superiors in private, he publishes his theories and hesitations to the world, and, in the

publishing, sometimes puts so much scorn and irony as to betray more than an intellectual doubt. He is really a semi-evangelical liberalist, and belongs to the school of Dr. Freeman Clarke and Edward Everett Hale. There is no argument in favor of his retention as a representative of Methodist theology which would not hold good for the introduction to our ministry of the gentlemen above named. In all commendable elements of character Dr. —— is worthy of association with them; but the Conference believes that neither they nor he are proper representatives of Methodism.

The action of the Conference is a protest against the misrepresentation of the Church, in its own pulpit, by a man pledged to present and defend its doctrines. Correct or not, the impression does prevail among the brethren that Dr. —— has, for years, made public statements which place the Church in an unfavorable light; as when, for example, he leaves his audience to infer that Methodists believe "the butcher theory" of the atonement; and his slurs and innuendoes against the Church and against the

orthodox theology have, more than once, made friends weep and foes applaud.

The action of the Conference is a protest against narrowness in interpretation. It believes that the doctrines which relate to God have an infinite side which it is impossible for man fully to comprehend. When, therefore, Dr. —— claims to state the full contents of the Atonement in his "moral" theory, he limits and lowers a sublime and divine doctrine which, in the thought of the Church, involves legal as well as moral relations and effects. He sneers at the doctrine of "the blood;" a doctrine which sets forth the bearings of justice and righteousness (as well as of love and mercy) upon God's government and man's character; a doctrine which no human philosophy can comprehend; but which the Evangelical Church in all the ages has held; which infidels and rationalists have abused and caricatured; but which, like deep and wide-reaching foundations, upholds the very throne of God. And on this foundation one may rest and be at peace, even though he may not see, measure, and map it out. Against this

narrowness the Conference protests, as well as against the coarse and violent assaults which it believes that Dr. —— has made upon the sacred and precious mystery of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The action of the Conference is a protest against the modification by mere human theories, through human sympathies, of the divine warnings and appeals. There are those who teach the certain restoration of the wicked, after ages of punishment. They say that somehow, sometime, something shall be done in God's universe to do away with the last result of sin. Well, who has not thought, with wonder and longing, in those directions? and who would not be glad of such an announcement? But there are ten thousand *wishable* things in human life that one has no ground to expect and no right to promise. The Methodist theology finds nothing in the Bible to justify a word of hope, in a Christian pulpit, concerning the finally impenitent. Private longings and speculations are one thing; public proclamations by authority altogether another thing. The Methodist theol-

ogy sees nothing but "blackness of darkness" over the fate of the persistent sinner. Its voice to him is a voice of warning, solemn and emphatic, with no tone of mercy in it beyond the present life. What God may hold in the life that is to come in possibilities of grace, consistent with the fearful threatenings of his word, I know not; but this I know, that the Bible gives me no right to proclaim any hope beyond to the incorrigible sinner here. I shut out every ray of light from his future, that sin, in the present, may seem to him the black and dreadful thing it is. Dr. —— has put a star, big and brilliant, in the impenitent sinner's sky. Methodism does not do this; Methodism never did it; dares not do it. The Conference says that even Dr. —— shall not do it by its authority; and it says this, not to limit, or assail, or punish, or persecute him, but for the sake of loyalty to the word of God.

The action of the Conference is a protest against the interruption of certain experiments now being made in society by the Church; and this protest is made in the interest of science,

and is no more narrow and unjust than the action of physicists, physicians, and politicians, every day and every-where. In the old-fashioned debating society, which did so much to promote thought and encourage reading among the people, the question for debate was plainly stated, "sides" taken, and representatives of the "affirmitive" and the "negative" chosen. When, through malice, mischief, or ignorance, the representatives of one side made argument in favor of his opponents, he was promptly reproved by his associates, and, if he persisted in it, was peremptorily sent to the "side" he represented and defended, and to which he really belonged. He was not silenced, but properly assigned. And in this new adjustment there was neither narrowness nor injustice. The remanding by his associates of a Republican to the Democrats, when he no longer represents Republican ideas and policies, is no proof of bigotry and persecution. He goes to his own place, uses his power of speech and suffrage according to his own views; nor is he thereby ousted from citizenship, nor is his patriotism

challenged. Mr. Tyndal makes an experiment in physics. Mr. Huxley enters the laboratory, and, by the smoking of a cigar or the jarring of a table, complicates and embarrasses the conditions of certain experiments in which Mr. Tyndal is interested. Who will charge the latter with narrowness for requesting Mr. Huxley to remove to another place or conform to the necessities of the occasion? To-day the schools of theology are experimenting on society. To thoughtful men the denominational subdivisions, with their varied creeds, constitutions, and modes of work, are but splendid experiments upon human nature, with the divine ideas and forces which revelation introduces; and the broadest and most scientific minds most prize the sharply-defined lines by which the denominations are separated. "With malice toward none, and with charity for all," they hold tenaciously to the creeds as conditions of an important experiment, in which not only men but angels are interested.

Here are Calvinists, Arminians, Liberalists, Congregationalists, Baptists, each with some dis-

tinguishing idea of biblical theology or church ordinance or church government, which they deem of importance to the race, and which, with pious and scientific intent, they seek to test among men. It is important that the favorable conditions for this testing be protected. While in some things the schools fully agree, and can, to the measure of their agreement, affiliate and co-operate, it is extremely desirable that, on other points, each should be left unembarrassed. If a man believe in a settled ministry so firmly that he cannot serve in the "itinerancy," he has no right to remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church. And that Church is not narrow if she care more for a great principle than an individual. If a man believe in "immersion" as the only baptism, there is a place where his faith can find its opportunity. If a man believe in the Episcopal rather than in the Congregational mode of Church government, his place is easily defined. If a man be "liberal" rather than "evangelical," (believing that the Atonement may be fathomed by the reason of man; believing in the partial inspiration of Scripture

and in the possibility of future probation,) there are platforms on which he can stand, and to these platforms he should at once repair. And if, for any purpose, he persists in remaining among the debaters and experimenters to whose side he does not belong, and whose work his presence retards, it is fitting for them kindly, firmly, and with unmistakable emphasis to say to him, "Go out from us, since thou art no longer of us." Physicists, politicians, physicians, do it. The Church has always done it, and always will do it, and that in the interest of true progress and culture.

It is claimed that Dr. —— does not, after all, hold or preach views out of harmony with the Methodist Church; that her standards are so indefinite and general as not to cover the points of his alleged divergence; and that he is but showing how wide a range of belief is compatible with fidelity to her creeds. No one knows better than Dr. —— how sophistical his claim is. It does not deserve a moment's consideration. One has but to read a single sermon of Dr. ——'s (that preached in —— Church, on

Sunday evening, before the Annual Conference of 1880) to know that he does not represent Methodism.

Prof. Swing, of Chicago, fairly put the case when he recently said to a Presbyterian clergyman, "Dr. —— is not a Methodist, and has no business to remain in the Church."

It is alleged that other men, high in official position in the Methodist Episcopal Church, are also "heretical." This will not save Dr. ——. His pulpit deviations are in the essentials of faith. If any one else in the Church (be he pastor, secretary, agent, or bishop) similarly promulgates doctrines which antagonize evangelical and Methodist theology, let him also be tried and rejected, and this in the interest of the broadest catholicity and the tenderest charity.

Let me urge young Methodist Episcopal people to read the Scriptures diligently and devoutly, to study candidly the standards of the Church, and they will find the Methodist Episcopal Church really among the broadest and fairest of all the Christian denominations.

The Methodist Episcopal Church does not require much of one who would, in sincerity of soul, seek the life of love and obedience which "salvation" involves. It does not require much "theology," or the acceptance of many "points" in a "creed." It asks only concerning motive and spirit, and then gives Church privileges—preaching, prayer, sacraments, fellowship, biblical training, and pastoral oversight. With very little faith, and a mere atom of a creed, one may enjoy the blessings which the apostolic Church offers.

But when one attempts to *teach* by authority in the Church, as exhorter, class-leader, Sunday-school teacher, parent, or preacher, the Church does have an understanding as to *what* is to be taught. And this is right and good and broad!

V.

THE CLASSMATES' MEETING.

"They spake often one to another."

WHEN young people have had a pleasant party, or an excursion, they like to get together and to talk about it.

When students who were at school together, after a long separation meet again, they take great pleasure in reviewing the toils and joys and struggles of school life. As "classmates" they meet and talk. When a society of any sort has had a peculiarly successful time in carrying forward some enterprise, the members talk and talk and talk about it.

Two young fellows were planning for a summer trip over the Atlantic. For months beforehand they would meet and talk and devise pleasant schemes for making the journey a success. They loved to talk about it. And during the trip, as they rode in European cars or

walked among the hedges of England, or examined museums and picture galleries, they kept up, day after day, a brisk conversation. They talked over their experiences: how they happened to start at all; how they felt as the "Good-bye" was spoken; how they enjoyed ocean life; how they were affected by the sight of land; which they regard as their "best day" up to the present time; what they anticipate from the journey yet to be prosecuted; what difficulties they apprehend; what plans they have for overcoming them; how the home-start will seem; and how the sight of native land again will delight them. About every thing they talk—day and night they talk. And the talk does them good. It makes them more united. It removes some of their difficulties. It increases their interest in the journey. It fixes on their memories its varied experiences.

In this world every body talks. By talk people give knowledge to others. By talk they test the knowledge given. By talk they awaken an interest in others. By talk they may increase their influence over others.

On all subjects men talk—on home life, on music, art, science, business, politics, daily news. Is it strange that men are sometimes inclined to talk on religion? Is any subject more important? Is any subject more interesting?

People may talk too much. They may talk in a wrong spirit. Talk may hurt. The tongue is sharper sometimes than a "sword." St. James says it is a "fire." People may talk too much even on religion—as when they tire people out, when they talk unwisely, when they talk on the wrong side, when they substitute talk for deeds and character. But so people may talk too much and in the wrong way on a variety of subjects. I have heard too much business talk, too much political talk, too much idle talk, and sometimes too much religious talk—but not often. And still it is possible to ring the bell of the church too often, too long, and too loud.

There are two or three kinds of religious talk. There is, for example, the *talk of religious controversy*, which finds place when people discuss the "doctrine" or the "form" of religion—the "trinity," the "intermediate state," the "second

coming," the "mode of baptism," "Sabbath *vs.* Sunday," and the like. I have seen people very angry in disputes over such questions. Sometimes, and under wise restraint, religious discussions are useful. They are too often abused, and lead to abuse.

There is the religious *talk didactic*, in which plenty of advice is given, in prayer-meeting, in class-meeting, and in private. It is very easy kind of talk, that is, for him who gives the advice; not always so easy for him to whom it is given. It is useful sometimes, especially when he who offers it takes it out of his own daily life. When out of a daily habit of cheerfulness he speaks of Christian joy, or when out of every-day honesty he talks about integrity—his words weigh their full worth. When talk comes from the wrong person, especially if given with professional glibness, or in a professional tone, it puts the honest-hearted hearer in mind of the clatter of an empty wagon, and is annoying and even, at times, vexatious.

There is *religious talk experimental.* It is the telling of how one felt once, and what one

once thought, and of how one feels and thinks now. It is a report from within, by the only tongue that can tell. Experimental talk may have several objects. It may be designed to give proof to others of the words of promise in the Bible. God says that he will, by his Spirit, do certain things for the soul of him who believes; that he will give assurance of pardon, peace, joy, strength, hope. Now when I do believe, and do receive what God promises, I only do what I owe to my fellow-men when I tell them about it. I add my testimony to the testimony of believers in all the world, and prove to others (some of whom greatly need and want proof of that kind) the truth of the promises.

Wise talk about one's experience may correct one's own notions about himself. I am not always sure of my feelings—as to their origin and their healthfulness. I may mistake my own moods and character as I may mistake other people's looks, motives, and conduct. When I talk about my experience, he to whom I talk may be able to correct my wrong views, remove

my doubts and difficulties, and show me how I err in my conclusions. Talk about his own experience may commit one to more definite views and more decided conduct. By expression my character may become stronger, my views clearer, my devotion to Christ more ardent. It may be "a cross," as we call it, to talk about one's self, especially about one's religious aims, feelings, doubts, discouragements, and resolutions. The "bearing of the cross" may be the very thing needed to give positiveness to profession and influence. It is a mistake to talk too much about experience, or to talk to any body and every body indiscriminately. It is a mistake to talk before too many people about one's inward struggles and doubts. But it is a great mistake not to talk at all on personal aims, desires, and delights. One may thereby lose an opportunity to witness for Christ and to influence others to seek Christ.

There is another kind of religious talk which is not controversial, nor didactic; neither is it, directly, experimental. It is a *self-forgetting talk about Christ*—his person, character, and

offices—until one finds his heart aglow with the light and love of Christ. It does not begin with a look within at all. It begins with a look upward toward Christ. It ends with an unsought warmth within. It does not begin with self, but with Christ. It meets Christ. It walks with Christ. It talks with Christ. It listens to Christ as he opens the Scriptures and reveals himself there in its history, its doctrine, its promises. And all at once, as Christ is seen to fill all the Scripture, he seems to fill the soul, and you afterward say to your neighbor: "Did not our heart burn within us as he talked with us by the way and opened to us the Scriptures!" Thus looking at Christ loosens the tongue. You see him and are delighted with his wisdom and love, and your delight finds words. You tell it. You tell it because you cannot help telling it. You tell it because you are *so* glad you know it. You tell it because you want other people to know how great and blessed and mighty a Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ is. He does not seem to be a dream or a doctrine, but a friend near and precious. Per-

haps, if you had begun by looking at yourself you would have had nothing to say about him, nor about yourself; but beginning to look at him, a fire began to burn in your inmost heart, and Christ gives you experience and you tell it. And as you tell it you feel an increase of the love that kindles it.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church—as in all Methodist Churches, from the little class of earnest disciples in Galilee to this very day—the believers in Christ have been in the habit of coming together to talk. In the days of waiting, before Christ came, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." In the days of Christ the classmates of his blessed school met often together in upper rooms, on mountain tops, in desert places, and by the sea-side, and they talked and talked and talked. They talked about their fears, their hopes, their doubts, their longings. They talked about him and his kingdom, his grace and his promises. After he left them they talked on, and prayed, and received the Holy Spirit in those glorious primitive class-meetings of the earliest Church.

Glad classmates! Glorious classmates' meetings!

Methodism revived the old plan of the apostolic days. To this day "class-meetings" are held in all Methodist branches of the Church. Sometimes they are poorly attended. Sometimes they are crowded. Sometimes they are dull and almost lifeless. Sometimes they are full of spiritual power. Young people are often found in them. Too often they are attended because enjoyed only by the old members of the Church.

Grand institution is the class-meeting of the Church! I commend it to every young Christian. Yes, some class-meetings are dull, and its regular attendants have old ways and sometimes odd ways of telling "experience." Some of the classmates are very peculiar, and use a set of stereotyped phrases, and, never having been educated, talk very poor grammar; and some are timid and scarcely know what to say, and so they say what they "really didn't exactly intend to say;" and some confound "happy feelings" with religious character, and go off into tearful and sometimes noisy talk and shouts; and some

forget to look to Christ, and only look at themselves. Cold, cynical, unbelieving hearts may find something to smile at in one of these class-meetings, but, after all, what a blessing they are to the Church; to the young, to the old, to the tempted, to the bereaved, to the discouraged! What shadows they drive away! What burdens they lift! What joy they bring!

The neglect of the "class" is one of the sad mistakes of certain Christians to-day. I write to young Methodist Episcopal Christians to plead with them on this subject.

This is not the place to point out the errors of class-leaders, or to give plans for improving the class-meeting. I may suggest that we need more class-leaders, and more of them women; and we need to put more of the class-meeting element into our Sunday-school classes; and in all social meetings, whether for prayer or fellowship, we need more of the Bible—its passages about Christ, who he is, what he can do, what he has promised, and how we can be more like him and the more glorify him. And we need to have more wise instruction given to our

young people as to the claims of the class, that they, as classmates in the school of Christ, may meet more frequently under spiritual, sensible leaders, and talk together about the Lord and his words and his ways, may put themselves on the side of Christ and his Church, and thus help to swell the current of Christian influence.

Let me give you, dear young Christians, a few words of counsel:

1. If a company of you would like to organize a little "classmates' meeting" of your own, rather than attend any one of the classes now organized in your church, go to the pastor and tell him about your preference. Let him appoint leader and time and place. Abide by his advice in the matter. He is your chief shepherd. He knows what is best for his flock. It would be unfair to organize any meeting without his consent. You will find him glad to give both consent and counsel.

2. When meetings are appointed always attend. *Go most certainly and most promptly when you feel least inclined to go.* Be governed by a sense of duty in this particular.

Mr. Wesley says, "Trample under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that 'we are not to do good unless *our hearts be free to it.*'" One of the things you most need in the training of character is the strengthening of the will. Nothing helps in this like the doing of duty from principle when one's feelings are least inclined that way. Go to the meeting because you *ought.* The more of this kind of self-control you exercise the stronger you will be, and the sooner you will come to delight in all duty.

3. Speak or not, as you prefer. Try to speak, but be true to yourself in every word you do speak. Avoid asking yourself what impression your testimony may make on others concerning you. Care for such impression may blight your best aspirations. Be true to Christ while you are true to yourself. It matters little what your associates think of you. Of this be very sure, they will easily read any hollowness or pretense in your looks or testimony. There is something in human nature that reads human nature without words and beyond words and in spite of words. Be true to the truth, and

your speech will "be with grace, seasoned with salt."

4. Do not feel bound to follow any particular order, nor to use set terms or phrases. Stand up to speak, or remain seated. Never mind how other people talk or what they do. Speak your own honest convictions in the way that seems best to you.

5. Do not feel bound to tell to any body else the deepest and most secret struggles of your heart. Use good sense in this. Some true things you might tell might do no good, and might do much harm to others.

6. Speak chiefly of Christ, how you think concerning him, how his "yoke" seems to you, what you know of his "liberty," and quote many of his own words. The important theme of Christian life is Christ. Let your talk be about him, and not about yourself, except as thinking about him your tongue is touched into testimony by his grace in your heart.

7. Take your Bible with you to the class. Read it while you wait for other members to come. Quote it as you are inclined. Perhaps

a short reading from the book may be the best contribution you can sometimes make to the profit of your classmates.

8. Carry the best aspirations of the happiest class-hour into your daily life. Take the class-room atmosphere home with you to kitchen and parlor. Take it to street and school, shop and field. Live all the day in the tone of your talk at the classmates' meeting. Fill parlors with it, and your "society" temptations will be reduced.

9. Turn the class-meeting into a council-fire, and around it discuss practical work. You love Christ; then work for him. You want to be like him; then try to work as he worked. Consult with your classmates about visiting and reading to invalids, about teaching in Sunday-school, about encouraging young people to read good books, about inviting neighbors to attend church, about helping in local missionary, temperance, reform, and other useful work. Fill your souls with great thoughts about Christ, and your lives with gracious deeds for Christ.

10. Avoid fault-finding, uncharity, and all ill-will. Be gentle and helpful toward your classmates. Strive to grow in grace daily. Seek the "sweet persuasion" that the Holy Spirit gives that you are a child of God. Prove, to yourself and others, by purity, patience, and active service, that you do not mistake the "voice." Let good deeds put the seal on good words, and let the classmates go forth weekly from their meeting to serve God.

You will be interested to read what our beloved little Church Hand-book, the "Discipline," says about "Classes and Class-meetings," "The Design of the Organization," etc.

CLASSES AND CLASS-MEETINGS.

The design of the organization of classes and the appointment of leaders is—

To establish a system of pastoral oversight that shall effectively reach every member of the Church.

To establish and keep up a meeting for social and religious worship, for instruction, encouragement, and admonition, that shall be a profitable means of grace to our people.

To carry out, unless other measures be adopted, a financial plan for the raising of moneys.

The primary object of distributing the members of the Church into classes is to secure the subpastoral oversight made necessary by our itinerant economy. In order to secure

this oversight, let the classes, wherever practicable, be composed of not more than twenty persons, and let the leader report at each Quarterly Conference the condition of his class, as follows: Number of members in his class; number of probationers; average attendance; number habitually absent; number of class-meetings held; number who contribute to the support of the church; number of visits made; number of heads of families in the class, and what proportion of them observe family worship; number of Church papers taken by class-members; miscellaneous matters.

Let each leader be careful to inquire how every soul of his class prospers; not only how each person outwardly observes the rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

Let the leaders converse with those who have the charge of their circuits and stations frequently and freely.

In order to render our class-meetings interesting and profitable, remove improper leaders; see that all the leaders be of sound judgment and truly devoted to God.

In the arrangement of class-meetings two or more classes may meet together, and be carried on according to such plan as shall be agreed upon by the leaders in concurrence with the preacher in charge.

Let care be observed that they do not fall into formality through the use of a uniform method. Let speaking be voluntary or the exercises conversational, the leader taking such measures as may best assist in making the services fresh, spiritual, and of permanent religious profit.

Let the leaders be directed to such a course of reading and study as shall best qualify them for their work; especially let such books be recommended as will tend to increase their knowledge of the Scriptures and make them familiar with those passages best adapted to Christian edification. Whenever practicable, let the preachers examine the leaders in the studies recommended.

VI.

OUR SETTLED ITINERANCY.

"Let us go into the next towns."

THE itinerancy is the name given to a system of ministerial supply by which pastors are changed from time to time from one field of labor to another. They serve a church for a limited term, and then go to another church, and then another.

Most ministers in churches of all denominations are itinerants. We find the smallest percentage of men who have, all their ministerial lives, been pastors of one church. All the Churches have an itinerancy. You will find it in the Presbyterian Church and in the Baptist and Congregational Churches; indeed, every-where.

There are two ministries: The itinerant system of the "settled ministry," and the settled ministry of the "itinerancy." The latter is the splendid, steady, working system of that methodical Church organization known as Methodism —the modern development of "Christianity in

earnest"—with its wise, rational, practical, efficient *methods* of work. It has tested thoroughly the itinerant plan.

The "itinerancy of the settled ministry" is found in all the Churches outside of our own; among them the Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, and Lutheran. Ministers change. Few remain for life. Very few for ten years. They itinerate when they grow tired of one place, or think they can be more useful elsewhere; or when their people grow tired of them, and also think they can be more useful elsewhere; or when a small minority of their influential people think a "change" would be profitable. Then the settled minister begins to itinerate. He itinerates as a "supply" to fill vacant pulpits. He itinerates as a "candidate" to find a vacant pulpit that he would like to fill. He seeks—and often finds. Not always, for an alarmingly large proportion of the ministers who belong to the settled ministry are without pulpits—thousands of them, and an alarmingly large proportion of churches are without pastors. The minister seeks, and when

he finds he "settles." No wonder people smile when it is reported that "The Rev. —— has been *settled* over —— Church." There is only one thing more amusing. It is to hear him preach a sermon in favor of a "settled ministry," and point out the "defects of the itinerancy." But it is a good thing for him to have that sermon on hand. He can preach it often—as he itinerates and settles, itinerates and settles, as the years go by. And we must not condemn him too emphatically. He does good.

The "ministry of the settled itinerancy" is another form of ministerial supply. It provides an intermediary agency in a system of bishops and presiding elders, and encourages expression of preference by both preachers and people. There is on the part of both, for the good of both, a reference of the questions "who" and "where" to godly men whose experience and wisdom may be trusted.

Let us test the system by results. What are the facts in Methodism? No church without a pastor; no pastor without a church, for a single Sabbath; little friction anywhere; mar-

velous harmony, activity, and success everywhere. There are some ministers and laymen in the Methodist Episcopal Church who would like to see some modification of the plan—the extension of the time of possible pastoral service in a single church to a longer but limited term. A very few advocates of extension would remove all restriction and allow a pastor to receive annual appointments for an indefinite time. But the voice of the Church has, with singular unanimity, indorsed the itinerant system as a whole. The latest attempts to lengthen the pastoral limit have been successful, and now five years is the limitation. Yet the comparatively small number of ministers and charges which availed themselves of the former extreme limit of three years seemed to justify the conservative policy of the Church in reference to this question. But let us follow the leadings of providence.

The ministry of the settled itinerancy has many advantages to people and to preachers.

It gives "talent" a fair chance to assert itself and take its place of opportunity and pre-emi-

nence. It provides for the expression of preference on the part of preachers and people. It makes it every-way desirable for the appointing power, if possible, to gratify both. It provides safeguards by which any abuse of power may be brought to speedy arraignment and punishment. It saves preachers and people a world of anxiety. It discourages the organization of permanent *cliques* or parties in the local church. It cultivates the spirit of mutual forbearance. It gives the various classes of people in a church a diversity of "talent" suited to their several tastes and needs—and all this without developing the partisan spirit. It distributes ministerial ability —and this builds up many sides of the church. What one man omits his successor supplies. It throws the responsibility of the continuous life of the church upon the laity, and not upon the pulpit. It develops local working force. Local preachers, class-leaders, and Sunday-school workers become a body of permanent pastors, so that the affairs of the church are in the same hands for years, whatever the ministerial changes may be; and in this local board of permanent pastors

the itinerant pastor has wise and experienced counselors. It also guarantees the frequent and various reiteration of the fundamental truths of the Gospel.

The settled itinerancy is a great blessing to the minister himself. If he be a thoughtful and studious man, it gives him rare opportunity for the study of human nature, the revision of sermons, and the reading of current theological and general literature. No system so develops preaching power and pastoral efficiency. It incites to promptness, system, and fidelity in pastoral work. The limit of time, understood from the beginning, impels him to industry and faithfulness.

The itinerancy secures to a pastor a delightful social life, widening his circle of choice friends through passing years and in many places. It gives him perfect independence of the local limitations which are created by local affiliations, and by a desire to conciliate public opinion and the "powers that be" in church and community. It makes him a "voice" from God to a people, to whom he comes by a divine commission,

among whom he speaks only for an appointed season, of whom he is sufficiently independent while with them to proclaim fearlessly the whole truth, and from whom he goes with wealth of experience and the firmness of a new resolve to labor more wisely and more energetically in another field. His itinerating life becomes a school of theology and of character.

The system is not "oppressive." No men are less oppressed than Methodist ministers. They are as independent a class of men as one can find in America. The itinerancy is vastly more free from the discomfort which follows the exercise of a superior's will and authority than the army and navy in this republican government. The young miss who "pities the wife of a Methodist minister subject to bishops, and likely at any time to be removed," looks with coveting eyes on subalterns of army and navy, forgetting what impotent things they are in the grasp of superior power, over which they have no influence, and from which, except in extreme cases, they can take no appeal. Ah, little sympathizing maiden, your itinerant preacher is a king as compared

with your lieutenant, captain, major, or colonel in army or navy!

Nor is the itinerancy "destructive of social life and sympathy." The new pastor is already known. He has his Conference reputation. He comes a new pastor, but not a stranger to the congregation. A hearty welcome awaits him. The parsonage is made warm, clean, and ready. Friends gather to greet him and his family. If he would be popular and attract society in the settled ministry, he has superior facilities for the same in the itinerancy. When he leaves he goes by the operation of a general law, not through local strife. His best qualities remain as a pleasant possession to his people. He is put into the sacred place of the old pastors. His good work is remembered. His faults are likely to be forgotten. His friends still love him. His opponents do not annoy him.

The local church, through this system, acquires an inheritance of talent, service, and sympathy in the pastors it has had. And these still remain in the Conference, accessible, visiting now and then their old parishioners, preaching

in the old pulpit, recalling the old times, warming the hearts of the converts of their ministry, who, if they have a pardonable preference for the preacher who led them to Christ, may, by his visit, gain a new impulse toward the kingdom. Rich, indeed, are our ministers and churches in the love and memory thus promoted!

"But this constant moving, how hard it is!" Yes, in the *settled* ministry, where no provision is made for systematic "moving," and where there are no permanent parsonages with permanent furniture—it *is* hard to move so often. But spare your sympathy for the itinerant who moves the personal effects of his family once every two or three years from parsonage to parsonage. Your wealthy resident of Fifth Avenue, who goes to Saratoga, or Cape May, the White Mountains, or Europe, summer after summer—packing up innumerable trunks, preparing to close the house for three months; moving out, adjusting furniture and goods at the "summer residence" or the hotel, coming back, getting the winter home into running order again—six movings in three years—why, young reader,

your millionaire and his family, who sneer at the movings and discomforts of the traveling ministry, move five or six times as often as the ministers whom they commiserate.

"But that permanent furniture in a parsonage—who wants to have a house with furniture in it that other people have used?" O! dainty friend, why don't you object to the hotel furniture at Cape May or Fifth Avenue Hotel? You enjoy that, although in one season it is used by twenty times as many different people as the furniture of a parsonage in twenty years. Nonsense, little fault-finder! Your objection has no weight. Soap and water and paint and varnish and taste and industry easily make old things new and fresh and clean. And "old furniture" is the fashion nowadays!

We know of no serious and unanswerable objections to the itinerancy. It has its toils and cares, but it is a delightful life, full of novelty to the young, full of opportunity to the old. It is a useful life—a life of divine aims and inspirations. It has achieved wonders for Church and nation.

It is, indeed, a pilgrimage. What else is human life? How many families stay in one house or in one place for any great length of time? And how soon all come to the grave! But this itinerancy is a pilgrimage, with Christ as it guide, heaven as its goal, and helpful service as its object.

What happy hearts have gathered about parsonage firesides! What noble lives have been begun and what splendid sacrifices have been made in these old parsonages of Methodism! And what glorious translations from earth to heaven have they witnessed!

Sometimes a young man who has been educated in the itinerant's home, and who has by father's professional position been admitted into good society—a class of society to which, perhaps, he could never otherwise have had access—is heard to complain against or ridicule the itinerancy. He hears people who never studied the subject speak lightly of it. He joins in their adverse criticism. Perhaps he goes into more "fashionable circles," unites with a more "fashionable church," forsakes the church that

gave him all the position and education he has, and ridicules the "itinerant system." His sister admits what silly girls say about its disadvantages, and is tempted to find, in other circles, her church and social home.

Young friends! sons and daughters of Methodist ministers! stand by your home, your father, your mother! Stand by the Church that made you all that you are! Study its history; and if you admire heroism and advancement you will find its records full of both. Study its economy; and if you admire sound philosophy and practical method, you will delight in the ways, as well as in the doctrine and spirit, of your beloved Church!

But, be loyal to your antecedents. Do not allow the Church that made you to be misrepresented by people who are ignorant of her record and doctrine and work. Speak bold words for her. Live and die in her communion. Use your influence to build up that branch of the Church in which your father and mother spent their lives, and to which you owe intelligent and perpetual loyalty!

VII.

EARNEST CHRISTIANS.

"Thy will be done."

IF Methodism is Christianity, Methodists should, of course, be Christians. And if "Methodism is Christianity in earnest," Methodists should be *earnest* Christians.

Now earnest Christians are those who have the thing and not merely the theory, the fact and not merely the form. They hold the doctrine in both letter and spirit. What their intellects know and their lips say, their hearts feel and their lives prove. They not only possess religious truth, but religious truth possesses them, captures them, masters them, fills them. The head is full of it. The conscience is quick and tender because of it. The heart is warmed by it. The will is strong in it. The tongue tells it. The eyes, at times, shine with it. And the steady-going, every-day living at home, at

school, at business, as well as at church and class-meeting, demonstrates its power. Our religion is from heaven. It is supernatural. It has divine energy in it.

To earnest Christians the truths of Christianity are *real.* They are serious, holy, splendid, eternal verities. God is, and is rewarder. He is not far from every one of us. In him we live and move and have our being. He is holy, and loathes sin. He is gracious, and pities the sinner. He is Love, and folds to his heart the penitent believer and fills that heart with peace —with love—with joy—such as the world has not and cannot give.

To earnest Christians Christ is a real being, divine and spotless; bringing the holy Father and the guilty prodigal together, by his death of atonement, by his resurrection of power, by his Spirit of regeneration. And this Holy Spirit is real—divine, omnipotent, eager to awaken and quicken the sinner, and to strengthen and witness and abide within him, and to guide him every day, and to sanctify him wholly, to fill him with divine love, for divine work here and

for divine fellowship hereafter. Thus "Theology" becomes personal and vital. It is not a matter of books and creeds and sermons, but of life and action—a *reality*.

Earnest Christians do not always *feel* the same, but they hold on to Christ. In darkness they trust and wait and work on. In sunshine they are glad. They are faithful to God in hours of good feeling and in hours of gloomy feeling. They are like the needle—true to the pole whether the warm sun of July shines upon it or the storms of January cover it with ice and snow.

Earnest Christians test and prove their faith and feeling by works. They *are*, and they *go*, and *do*. Christian doctrines with them are not choice seeds wrapped up in pretty papers and placed in boxes on shelves, with scientific names to tell what they are, and figures to show how much they are worth. They are rather seeds in good ground—sprouting, growing, blooming, and bearing fruit. What they yield tells what they are worth.

Earnest Christians visit the sick, comfort the

bereaved, read to the blind, give to the poor, teach the children, feel practically interested in mission work at home and abroad, in reforms of every kind. They are deeply interested in the country, so talking and so voting that there may be pure laws and wise men to execute them. They account nothing unimportant that concerns man—his temporal, social, moral, spiritual life. If the temperance work needs an advocate in a town, or if a great moral question is dragged into politics and needs public discussion, every body knows which pulpit is sure to speak out on the right side, and with perfect fearlessness. Methodism believes in a religion that must go on missions of faithful reproof and gracious invitation—every-where. It has its eye on heaven, but it believes in bringing as much of heaven to the earth as possible.

Earnest Christians know that earnestness must be fed by truth and fellowship and prayer. They insist on much Bible reading, on comparison of Christian experiences, on united and fervent prayer, on hearty singing, on practical work with people for their souls' sake. Hence

Methodists are famous for revivals, and for speaking plain words to sinners from the pulpit and in private. Indeed, when a minister of another denomination (Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist) is very active and talks with unusual feeling, and goes into religious work with his whole soul, people say, "He is a regular Methodist." When a prayer-meeting in some other church is full of heartiness and spiritual power, it is called "a Methodist prayer-meeting." Dr. Chalmers said the true thing when he called Methodism "Christianity in earnest." Method on fire is always full of power. We glorify system, but we seek the Spirit also.

Earnest Christians go so far over to the right and safe side that every body knows where to find them on those questions concerning which there is no specific "Thus saith the Lord," but which are left to the judgment of true souls and the spirit of self-sacrifice for the neighbor's good. They say, "Don't let us tamper with things in which may lurk evil to weak or imperiled brethren." Therefore genuine Methodists do not patronize the theater, attend dances,

or play cards. If a Methodist does such things, every body discounts him. Even worldly people say of him, "That's out of place in a Methodist." And all this is not because Methodists are narrow, but because they are broad and tender-hearted and want to help and not hinder the true upward progress of society. They want to be uncompromising, positive, and loyal to the highest life of love and service. It is a grand thing to be decided. There are rest and strength and joy in decision.

All Methodists do not attain this standard. That is a sad fact. But thousands and tens of thousands do, and this is the idea and spirit of the Church-development known as Methodism, and toward it we all should aspire, and for it we should work; all of us; always and in all places. This is our ideal.

My young reader, are *you* an earnest Christian? This is the great question. And here are test-questions which may aid you in giving answer:

Is religious truth a real thing in your life? Does it move you to think and ask questions, and

wonder and desire to know, and to be troubled when you are uncertain, and to be uncomfortable when you think how far you are from the life your religious ideas require you to live?

Do you believe in God, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and in eternal life?

Do you know (with a knowledge that takes hold of you) that you are a sinner against God's law, and that you can never make amends for your past sins, and never undo what evil you have done by any possible good you may do?

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only hope you can have—Jesus Christ the mediator between God and man—Jesus Christ who became flesh and died and rose from the dead and is now in the heavenly places? Do you believe this with your heart?

Do you give yourself to Him of your own will, with a glad heart, to be his—his servant, his disciple, his friend, his brother? Do you leave your case with him as a boy involved in debt leaves his affairs in the hands of his father, who has promised to look after every thing and

settle every outstanding account? Do you leave your case with Jesus Christ as a sick man who has "given up all hope" in himself, leaves his case with the new physician who has come—a man of great skill and wide fame? Do you turn yourself over to Jesus Christ as a voyager across the Atlantic surrenders himself to steamer and captain—depending upon them every hour of his journey?

Is all this faith and surrender practical? And is it steady? Does it hold good only when you "feel good?" or is it like an honest man's bargain—firm through thick and thin, in sun and storm, in gloom and gladness, in winter and summer? Are you a pledged Christian all the time and every-where? Are you enlisted—a new but a true recruit in the army? Asleep, awake, elated, depressed, praised, hated—are you all the time, all the same, so far as purpose and profession are concerned? Do "all the folks" know it? Are you not ashamed of it? Do you show your colors and stand by them? A great deal of religion is "warfare" in which one must live without sight but "by faith,"

without feeling but "by faith." It is like school-life in which one is enrolled and assigned to his place and appointed to his lessons, and must go on steadily whether his soul is inflamed with ambition and hope, or discouraged by poor health, dull intellect, and difficult tasks. The true student simply holds fast and goes on. The true disciple in the school of Christ does the same. He holds fast and goes on. Do you?

Do you put yourself into training as athletes do—going through the required drill to give suppleness to the joints, strength to the muscles, and steadiness to the nerves? Do you put yourself into right conditions? Do you compel yourself to do your duty in this respect whether you feel like it or not? Do you pray every day? Do you every day read a portion of Scripture? Do you attend prayer-meeting and class-meeting and Sunday-school and preaching? Do you help people? Do you give of your means to advance the Gospel? Are you a good student in the art of spiritual living? Are you a good athlete in Christian life?

Do you keep in mind every-where your religious relations and professions and responsibilities? Do you refuse to do "worldly" things because of their influence on others and on yourself, and because of the place you hold in the Church? Are you willing that every body should know that you are a Christian? And are you, therefore, willing to be pronounced "Puritanic" and "Methodistic" and "over-particular?" Can you bear the "shame" of the Gospel—in the eyes of worldly and frivolous people?

Do you find will and life obeying conscience? Do you gain victories over the flesh? Do you conquer temptation? Do you avoid secret sins—sins of the flesh, sins of the passions, sins of the imagination, sins of envy and pride and temper? If you cannot "feel happy as some do," can you conquer self and sensuous society and Satan? Does the Gospel truth give you principle, and does this Gospel principle rule your daily life?

When you go wrong do you at once go back to Christ, and ask his forgiveness and his help?

Do you seek to please him and to have peace in him? This is your privilege.

Do you ever have a "sweet persuasion" that you are a child of God? No audible voice tells you so. No visible sign assures you. But is there a sweet, restful feeling in your heart that seems to sing,

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father cry?"

Are you called by a voice within to lines of duty? Do you obey it? Do you love to obey it? Is your life guided by an inner leading—a word in the heart inspired by the word of God?

Do conviction of Bible truth and desire to be a Christian and surrender to Christ bloom into all-absorbing love for God and man? Does a strange joy sometimes fill your heart—as the warm sun and sweet fragrance of roses fill a June day? Can you rejoice in the Lord? Does

heaven seem a glorious reality to you? And is earth glorious because of the divine life you lead? Have you seasons when you seem to live in the land of Beulah, with perfect rest and the assurance of hope? And can you understand the Bible revelations about heaven because you have in your own heart a taste of heaven?

Dear young Christian, all these things are possible to you. But remember that the triumphs of victory are preceded by the awkwardness of the drill, the fatigue of the march, the weariness of the camp, and the perils of the battle-field. Enlist, drill, endure, fight, wait—and in the end wear the crown of victory! Sing:

"Thy saints in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar—
By faith they bring it nigh!"

VIII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"In remembrance of me."

EVERY three months, or perhaps every month, what you and many call the "sacrament" is administered in your church. You call the day of its administration "Communion Sunday." By the sacrament you mean the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, although that is no more a sacrament than is the sacrament of baptism. The word "sacramentum" among the Romans signified the oath of loyalty to his country which the Roman soldier assumed. Some people speak of this service as the "communion," and in the English Church it is called the "Holy Communion." The word "communion" is from the Greek word which means fellowship, and it implies a communion or fellowship between Christ and his people, and between the people themselves. Paul speaks of the "communion of the blood of Christ" and of "the communion of the body of

Christ"—symbols and means through which union with Christ and union among believers are indicated and promoted. This sacrament is also called the "eucharist," from a word which means thanksgiving. It is called "the feast"—that is, a feast of those having the grace it commemorates. Thus we see that this solemn and impressive ordinance, or service, has several names. The service itself is vastly more important than the name, and still more important is the spirit in which it is observed.

Jesus instituted this feast. It was on the night before his crucifixion. His disciples were filled with uncertainty and with sadness. They did not know all that was to happen. His words, his looks, his voice foreshadowed a great sorrow, and there in the upper room, in the solemn hour of night, he ordained the supper you celebrate. "Do this," he said, "in remembrance of me," and Paul gives a most impressive account of it in his letter to the Corinthians, where he says (R. V.): "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed

took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." If you care at all for Jesus Christ, his person, his character, his work, his cause, you will be interested in the Lord's Supper, and you will be willing, if not eager, to share in it; and you should be anxious to know all that is meant by the act. The holy sacrament has been greatly abused by the ritualistic and Romish Churches, they giving a peculiar significance to it which is not justified by any thing that is spoken in the word of God. And sometimes they make it a species of idolatry, and, to a great degree, render it void by their superstitions.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper seems to be a very little and, apparently, unimportant thing, and yet little things may represent very great things. A kiss may be a pledge of perpetual

love. The simple bowing of the head in legal assent may seal a covenant that no human power can break. The flag of your nation, which may be put into your pocket, represents power and wealth and courage and a wonderful history. A plain gold ring put on your finger by a dying mother, as she asks you to think of her at the twilight, may not be worth much in dollars and cents, but no money could buy it from you. Her dying request may not involve much—a simple look at the ring in act of remembrance—but it brings tears to your eyes and fills your heart with memories, and you live more carefully because of it all. When Jesus withdrew his physical presence from earth he left a monument, a memorial, of that presence here. He established an observance. It is a very simple thing—this eating of bread and drinking of wine. There is no great "feast" in it. It satisfies neither hunger nor thirst. It is the meaning in it, and not the matter of it, that gives it real value. Jesus did not tell his disciples how it was to be observed. He gave no particular and minute directions about the details. He did not

specify any particular posture of body. Jesus Christ never cared for forms. He never cares for the mode of taking the Lord's Supper or of receiving baptism. He denounced over-carefulness about such little matters. His whole Gospel is opposed to such carefulness. The Romish Church has put pagan rites into the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, has turned the service into superstitious observance, and has thereby lost the sense and sweetness and power of it; indeed, destroying its whole character. Jesus Christ instituted a simple sacred souvenir of his life, his words, his death, and makes it a means of grace to all those who humbly and believingly receive it.

Now, although the observance of the communion is apparently a little thing, it is really a great thing, full of meaning. Let us see what we do every time we partake of the sacrament.

The act recalls *a wonderful history*. It suggests him who appointed it; his life, deeds, words, spirit—which made the most wonderful career that the world has ever witnessed. It

points the whole world to a record of facts. It points this age of unbelief to *facts*—not the less real because remote as to time and place of their occurrence. It is therefore an act of solemn declaration to the world of the reality of a history which more radically and directly affects the world than any other chapter in it. Is it useless to celebrate the Fourth of July? The history recalled by the Communion is worth more to man than the Declaration of Independence. Christ by his life and death gave freedom to the whole race, and his life itself was wonderful, beautiful, tender, unselfish, and full of heroism.

The act obeys the command of *a loving friend*. Christ loved man as man. He loved him even unto death. On the eve of the greatest display of love that the universe ever saw he asked all who believe in him to commemorate for all time that love and that death. This is a small thing. Shall we think on Sabbath evening of a mother's dying request and forget his command whose love is deeper, more enduring, and worth more to us than a mother's love?

The act gives us *the opportunity* to make public our affection for Christ before the world. It is a way of declaring to the world our allegiance to Christ. It is a way of showing our colors. It says to our fellow-Christians, "I am one of your company; I want to be associated with you rather than with the world." It says to our associates in school, shop, and society, "I am one who believes in Jesus Christ and his Church. I am trying to acquire a character like his." It is a way of winning others to Christ, to the Bible, to the Church, and saying, "I believe with all my heart in all those things." It is an act in connection with which the grace of Christ is given. It is a sign and a means. It is not a loadstone in which power was deposited long ago, a sort of talisman, as the ritualistic and Romish Churches teach, but it is a present means of grace, to be received with faith and thus to be made a channel of spiritual power.

The act has *hope* in it. It looks forward as well as backward: forward to his coming again to the world; forward to our coming to him; forward to the feast of his saints in heaven.

It is an act in which *all Christendom joins;* a service of the Holy Catholic Church. All denominations observe it. It is a bond of union; union in testimony to the facts of history; union in obedience to the command of Christ; union in hope of everlasting communion; union in devotion to the person of our Lord.

It is an act which *the Church has always performed.* It is an ancient service, antedating cathedrals and castles. It allies us to the first century, and to that night in which Christ instituted it.

It is an act in which *each particular Church* is interested. Ever since your Church stood it has witnessed this ordinance. The old saints kept this feast. The old ministers administered it. What glorious times have been witnessed as bowed multitudes have received the bread and wine in recognition of their Redeemer, in confession of their faith, and in solemn covenant of service!

The act has *a family value.* Your father and mother, your dearest friends, wherever they are, observe it. Are they absent? You meet them

at the table of the Lord. Nothing can be more perfect as a bond of sympathy than this habit of observing the communion on given days wherever you live and wherever you wander.

The act has, above all, *a personal value.* It is a way of personal approach to God; of confession, of renewed consecration. It helps the soul to take a new step. It gives grace to resist temptation.

When we have in the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper recalled the wonderful history of Christ, obeyed his command as the command of a loving friend, embraced the opportunity for making public our devotion to Christ, looked forward with hope, looked around the globe with charity, looked backward with reverent memory, and felt all the sacredness associated with our own Church, our own family, and our own spiritual lives—when we have done all these things there still remains a deeper and more important truth which lies at the very foundation of this most sacred institution. The fact which gives real significance to the emblems, and real value to the service, is *that atone-*

ment which Christ made for us by his death, which we commemorate as we receive the broken bread and the sacred wine.

The doctrine of the atonement is a profound mystery. What great truths are involved in it —truths relating to God and to Christianity and to God's government over men—our human intellects can never fathom. Angels desire to look into these things. Figures of speech are employed in the Holy Scriptures which express in the most emphatic way the importance of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. We were as men in debt, with no resources and no possibility of finding resources sufficient to cancel that debt. And lo, One came who paid it all! And by his death, in some mysterious way, the price was paid and our debt absolutely canceled. We were as men in bondage, with no power to break the bars and chains which held us, and no arm of earthly friends strong enough, and no authority competent, to set us free. But the Lord Jesus made our release a blessed possibility. These great thoughts should come into our minds as we receive the holy communion.

How it is possible for God to be just and yet justify the ungodly is a problem which lawmakers cannot solve. How to sustain the dignity and honor of the divine government, and yet to extend the scepter of grace to an offending subject—this is a mystery. Without attempting to explain it we receive the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and simply accept them. Christ died to sustain the glory and purity of the law, and yet to make possible to every one pardon and peace and immortal blessedness. It is this doctrine, clothed in mystery, that we bring before our minds as we bend in reverence and awe at the communion table. He died that we might not die. He poured out his blood as a ransom for our sins, and through his obedience our obedience, although offenders, is made possible. We are in danger of being shocked by the strangeness of this doctrine. We cannot comprehend it, and therefore we are in danger of repelling it. But, if God's word teaches any thing, it teaches this relation of the soul to Christ, and conditions spiritual life upon the acceptance of him as one crucified for our sins.

If our readers stumble at these great and mysterious truths let them move cautiously before they foster doubt. With the great law of sacrifice and substitution we are familiar in life. Every day we see voluntary suffering for the sake of others. Every day we see the innocent suffer for the guilty; and the highest joy of the human soul is when, through self-abnegation, it dares to put itself in the place of another, and bear burdens and suffer grief that through it others may have strength and gladness. Christ came to fight the powers of evil, to make salvation possible, to open the gate of heaven to believers; and there were mysteries which no human or angelic mind can fathom, associated with the scene of Gethsemane and the long hours of darkness and agony on Calvary. He went down into deep gulfs of woe that we might have pathways prepared for our feet from earth to heaven. He suffered that we might be saved. And it behooves us to learn this lesson of self-sacrifice ourselves, that what the Christ did for us we may do for our fellow-men.

Naturally we shrink from suffering. We

want what we call "good times," "happy days," no trouble, much pleasure. And yet do we not know that in these days of good fortune and success no real peace is found? Joy comes in the way of sorrow. Some of the happiest people in this world are the people who are deprived of what we call "worldly comforts." The writer of these lines once wrote a little story about a boy whom he called Hartwell Harrington. Now Hartwell has had every thing that the world can give, and yet there come to him seasons of deep and bitter depression. What Hartwell needs is the spirit of the self-sacrificing Christ. What he needs is to know by a personal experience the joy of loving self-surrender. A correspondent, who has evidently tasted all the meaning of this truth, wrote the author: "I am truly sorry for Hartwell Harrington. . . . If he has 'every advantage of an earthly sort,' love, friendship, belongs to the Church, and is a Christian, and the religious truths which he usually accepts cannot drive away these times of depression and discouragement, it may be that he would gain help and strength were he to visit homes where are

anxious business cares over against the 'sure success;' shattered health instead of his chief temporal blessings; anxieties for future necessities instead of an abundance; children battling with the vicissitudes of life; no ability to take one step in the future without the 'unfailing' hand; where there are days when 'cares like a wild deluge' press from within and from without, and yet when the *sun always shines.* Hartwell would find in such homes no remembrance of dark days, but he would find a tear-stained spot with 'shut door' where 'He is faithful that promised.' I wish that he might be comforted, and remember that 'a child of God praying to the Father is mightier than a warrior in armor of steel.'"

This unknown correspondent reveals the deepest root-principle of Christian character—a perfect trust in a Father's care. This consciousness is reached through the ministry of the Spirit, by the sacrifice of Christ. One living for others, and having sorrow and yet always rejoicing, knows something even in this life of the mystery which is involved in the great sac-

rifice which we commemorate at the table of the Lord.

Dear young reader, understand the Holy Sacrament. Prize it. Never omit it. Prepare for its intelligent observance. And as you draw near to the altar come with confession, with prayer, with faith, with covenant purpose; regardless of mere feeling, give yourself anew to the service of Christ and of his Church.

IX.

TRUE CHURCH LOYALTY.

"Whatsoever things . . . are just."

MR. A—— is a Methodist. He belongs to the Methodist Episcopal Church; that is, he did for years belong to that Church. He was, in a sense, born in the Church. He was baptized and trained in it. He joined "on probation." He and his family attended it regularly. They owned a pew or had a place in church which they called their own.

Mr. A—— moves West. He lands with his family in a little western town. He expects to make this place his home for many years, perhaps for the rest of his life. He does—to his credit be it recorded—look up the Methodist Episcopal Church in the town. He attends its service on Sunday. His family go with him. It must be confessed that the church has a dingy look. The walls are somewhat stained

with water from a leaky roof. They are broken in some places, and well smoked up. The windows are stained, but not with artistic glass. And there are cobwebs in sight. The church ought not to have this forlorn appearance—but it does.

The people are not a fashionable-appearing set. They are poor—the most of them. And the preaching is not brilliant. The pastor is a plain man. He might dress better—if his salary were larger. Indeed, on his limited salary he might afford to comb his hair a little more carefully, and take the knots out of his unnecessarily long beard. One would not be attracted toward him for any reason except that he seems to be an earnest man and occupies an important position.

Mr. A—— is not pleased with church-building, people, preacher, singing, or sermon. "It is not at all like the little church" he left in "Eastern New York." There are, all through the West, churches just as good, and people just as refined, and preachers just as gentlemanly as one will find in the East. But Mr. A—— hap-

pened to strike an unfortunate combination of conservatism and coarseness.

The Sunday-school is like the church. Little Tom A—— didn't like the fellows in his class. Miss Jennie A—— was "disgusted with the girls" in her class, and John A—— declared he "would never go back to that school." And that Sunday evening the family canvasses the church and the school, the people and the preacher—and bad grows worse as they contrast this Sunday with last Sunday. They find more people whom they don't like, and recall more people in the old church whose faces they miss.

The following week Mrs. A—— and Miss Jennie receive a call from two Presbyterian ladies, or Congregational ladies, or Baptist ladies, perhaps. These ladies have heard, of course, that the A——'s are Methodists. Their minister told them so. And he also told them to call. "We may be able to get them into *our* Church," he said. The uncatholic and impertinent suggestion matures into a deliberate plan of proselyting. So the "ladies" call with a purpose. Conversation is opened with the usual

society questions and answers. Then come allusions to East and West, to our town, its growth, its schools, its churches; and then the question blossoms out, "What church will you attend?"

"We've always been Methodists," answers Mrs. A——.

"O, Methodists! Indeed!" The feigned surprise is a fitting opening for the words that follow: "Well, Methodists are a very good sort of people, pious, you know, and all that; but here in our town there is really no society among the Methodists. They are a poor class. All the best people go to *our* church; and if you want to get your daughters into good society, you will have to come to us. Dr. ——, Judge ——, the ——'s, and the ——'s all go to our church, you know; and Mr. ——, our minister, is an elegant man, refined, and good company, and a lovely preacher."

The "call"—a double call, of doubtful honor—tells on the susceptible and discontented women. "Society" has wonderful power. Then the girls tease mother and mother teases father, and, after more calls and more appeals and more

misrepresentations, backbones bend, and the Church letters go into the greedy grasp of a minister who calls himself a gentleman, and yet deliberately laid a plan to defraud the local Methodist Episcopal Church of a family to which it is entitled, and to fill a pew in his own church with people allured, not by the love of Christ, but beguiled through a carnal desire for social standing in the community. Thus "society" triumphs. The low standards of taste and of conscience, on the part of the proselyting pastor and his committee, have succeeded. A cowardly family drops the "cross," and, regardless of doctrine, usages, antecedents, memory, goes into a "society church."

The self-respect and religious tone of the whole family are, of necessity, lowered. Instead of giving, they receive; instead of leading, they are led; and more than once they are laughed at by the very people who took them such easy captives. "They were glad enough to come to us," they say. "And why?" they ask.

There are some other things to be said on this subject. I do not excuse that little Methodist

Episcopal Church. Indeed, there are some severe things that should be said to its members and pastor. In fact, it is a slovenly church. Its walls and windows and cobwebs are a disgrace to it. It needs a gospel of soap and shingles and glass and kalsomining. Its pastor ought to be ashamed of himself. He has a slovenly church because he is a sloven. I wish John Wesley or our "Church Extension Society" could take him in hand for an hour. No wonder he has such a church! In this day we should have clean churches, constructed and decorated according to a true art, ventilated perfectly, and warmed comfortably. No parlor should be more pleasant and inviting than the house of the Lord, whither we go on Sabbath-days to serve him and meet his saints.

When a Methodist Episcopal church drops into the hands of boors, and is kept as barns are kept, it must not wonder if its tone repels people, and if even loyal Methodists of taste and refinement find in the case severe and unnecessary temptations to unfaithfulness.

Again: Why did not earnest Methodist Episcopal women call early in the week on Mr.

A——'s family, and show the best spirit that dwelt in the Church, and invite the co-operation it needed from the new comers? Why stand off and give rival congregations a chance to tempt our own people? Why did not the pastor have his forces organized and at work? That church needs a new preacher, and a new board of stewards, and leaders, and trustees. What a pity it could not have had a new member who might have helped it up!

But all this does not excuse Mr. A—— and his family. Concerning them something more remains to be said. We can afford to look into his antecedents. Mr. A—— is a good, solid man, and might be a very useful man. His father was much less of a man. He was well "down" socially, was poor, much despised by many people in the town in which he alternately worked and lounged. He was much pitied by others. He had no standing financially, socially, morally. One day, fifty years ago, a Methodist preacher dismounted, fastened his horse to a post, and entered the little house where A——'s father lived. A—— was not himself born then. The

preacher spoke plain words to the man and his wife; told them (what no pulpit or preacher had ever told them before) that God loves all men and that Christ died for all men and that all have a genuine offer of eternal life; that through repentance and faith and good works a sinner may be blessed and be a blessing; that through faith he receives and through good works he proves and uses God's grace; that a guilty soul may have pardon for the past, peace and power and hope in the present, and in the life to come fellowship with God. The preacher proved all this by the words of the Holy Bible which he held in his hand. He was so earnest, so faithful, so persistent that old A—— and his wife were impressed, and they kneeled down and prayed—the preacher leading. Then they sought diligently the promised "blessing," and in the little old kitchen and sitting-room and parlor (for in A——'s house they were one and the same) there opened out a new life, a new love, a new joy The preacher often came to A——'s. He preached there, organized a class, and started a little prayer-meeting for Thursday

evenings. And what glad days those were in the little cottage! A—— was a Christian, through and through, and every body acknowledged it. He drank no more. He gave up bad companions. He lived honestly, humbly, uprightly, and was respected more and more by his neighbors, who would say to each other, "The Methodists did it." But for that Methodist preacher and the Church that sent him to old A——'s house, young A—— would have been born into an atmosphere of tobacco and rum and family jars and social degradation. As it was, thanks to "the Methodists," A—— was born into a house of prayer and spiritual song and good-will, where "class" was held and sermons were preached. His family was poor, but it was respectable—and this respectability was owing to the Methodists. A—— grew up to manhood, held to virtue, industry, and economy by his father's and mother's life and example, and led, through a Methodist preacher's influence, to seek a better education, and surrounded in his school days by Methodist friends, who stood by and encouraged him. His wife's

history is very much the same as his own. And when they got off the train to reside at the little western village, all the money and start and standing and taste and education they had they owed to Methodism—to a Methodist preacher, to a Methodist mother, to a Methodist father, to a Methodist school, to Methodist society.

Now Mr. A——, who has been made all that he is by the Church, has a chance to pay back a part of his gain, to lift up the Church, help it on, improve, beautify, strengthen it.

What did he do? Alas for the power of "society"—and of the "world!"

Mr. A—— might have remained in his own communion; given his money where it was needed; put his taste into walls and windows; put his knowledge and tact into Sunday-school and official board; started a social center within his own Church which would have attracted and confirmed others and given his own Church a standing in the town. He would have had the satisfaction of being a leader rather than of being led. And every body would have respected him more. And he would have respected himself.

One thing is never to be overlooked or forgotten: there are many Methodist families who from different social beginnings are indebted to the Church, to a great degree, for moral and spiritual antecedents; who in homes of wealth were by Methodism saved from dissipation and degradation, and, perhaps, from poverty. Strength, fiber, harmony, and prosperity came through Methodism into elegant but exposed and worldly homes, and because of it the family remained in affluence, the father's honor continued, and mother became the saint she was. All these owe a debt to their Church. And it is a debt which can be paid only by personal loyalty.

Do I assert that a man cannot be as good a Christian in the Presbyterian or Baptist or Congregational Church as in a Methodist Episcopal Church? I do not put it in that way. I love and honor these branches of the Holy Catholic Church. I know and love many of their devout ministers and members. But I *do* assert that when a man leaves one Church and joins another for "society" reasons, and to shirk the "shame" and service of his own, leaves the Church which

his father and mother loved, whose doctrines he cannot deny, and to whose ministry he is indebted for all the Gospel training he has—I say that this man commits a great wrong, sets a bad example, and sows the seeds of moral weakness in his household.

Methodism has a right to the service of her own people whom she has blessed, and whose family sources owe all their best things to her influence. She has a right to ask their influence, their personal membership, their moral and financial support; and if our people had more conscience in this respect we should be able to build better churches, train abler preachers, develop a more influential and refined Christian society, do more good to the world at large, and set an example to our sister communions of the glorious Holy Catholic Church.

Let us be "just" in matters denominational, and be true to Methodism—the dear old fostering mother—who best represents to-day the beautiful, apostolic, holy, and divine doctrine and polity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

X.

THE STORY OF MARK.

"Forever thine."

MARK was a young country boy who had worked on a farm from the day he was able to begin work up to the day that he left his old house for "Oxonian Hall," where he was recorded by the registrar as "Eighteen years old; a farmer by profession; father dead; mother living; a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church; at school six winter terms in Lincoln Township, —— County, —— State." There were a few tears on the broad red face of the boy as he said "Good-bye" to his plain, faithful, affectionate old mother, who put her arms around his neck and gave him three kisses, tender and energetic kisses, breaking on his lips in the music of a mother's love. There is no music in the world like it. She said, "Be true, Mark, to your father's memory and to your old mother." And he said, "I will." There was a slight blush on the big boy's face as he stood before the registrar and

answered the questions that were put to him. His answers are recorded above. This is the story of Mark's "matriculation" at Oxonian Hall.

Mark had not enjoyed many educational advantages, but he had made the best use of those that came in his way. He had a good mother, and that is a great step toward the highest and broadest culture. He had access to a few good books which made up the little library he had inherited from his father. He listened as his mother read them aloud when he was a little boy. He read them over again for himself when he grew larger. He consulted them often, especially for the "debates" they used to hold in the winter schools he attended, and for help in the "compositions" he had to write. His mother was a great reader; took one good weekly secular and one weekly religious paper, and read every word of both. And she talked about all the subjects on which she read. She talked well. Her voice was good, her enunciation distinct, her style accurate, her face bright, and she loved the boy for whom she read and talked. Winter school did a good deal for Mark, but

mother-school all the year round did vastly more. Mothers are worth more than school-masters. And school-masters are worth ten times more to a boy with a good mother than they can be to the other scholars. And this is the story of Mark's preparation for matriculation at Oxonian Hall.

In an institution so full of the atmosphere of true culture, with men and women of learning, of taste, of tact, and of religious influence, as were his teachers, Mark soon became an enthusiast in study, and pushed forward with a degree of application and success which afforded his professors great satisfaction. They saw the making of a strong man in the rustic, whose appearance had not won him an immediate social recognition, but whose power, slowly developing, had made him stanch friends both among his class-mates and in the faculty. In no sphere of life do earthly ambitions find earlier or fuller play than in the scholastic. The brighter, the quicker, the more versatile and successful the young student, the higher do his hopes and resolves ascend. Visions of achievement and of

renown flash across his heavens. He is full of confidence. Recitations, discussions, compositions quicken his desire and strengthen his purpose. And here creeps in the demon of Selfishness, in the form of vaulting Ambition, the influence of which is as deadening to all the finer instincts and aspirations of the soul as is Covetousness itself. Mark was not exempt from the temptations which every youth must encounter. He had some fierce conflicts, some deadly doubts, some unworthy feelings of jealousy as he measured the power of his class-rivals, and some ambitious schemes which dazzled his imagination and weakened his spiritual life. He did not drink beer or wine. He did not smoke. He visited neither theater nor billiard-hall. Mark was a circumspect, honorable fellow, as boys are weighed in these times by public opinion. But angels saw the struggle going on within him, and he himself knew how selfish, worldly, and unchristian were his most interior thoughts and motives. Success therefore gave him little pleasure. It seemed to him as though a promising field of grain was spread out in

fresh verdure under the sun on the slope of the mountain. But he who knew best, and as casual observers could not know, knew that the heat and fissures and rumblings under ground and the occasional puffs of smoke among the young grain were sure signs of a force underneath which was hostile to the coming harvest, and that any hour it might burst forth to wither and bury every blade of wheat that grew in the field. Mark knew that with such a heart the culture of his head would not be of much worth.

It was evening. The students were gathered in the chapel of Oxonian Hall for prayer. They were detained a little later than usual that evening. There was a deep religious feeling in the institution. The claims of God on the love and service of the students were keenly felt. It came like a warm wave over the school. There are such warmings up of the physical atmosphere when Nature seems to take a leap into life. You can almost see the leaves and blossoms come out. There are such sweeping currents in the spiritual world. They come with summer warmth out of the heavens. I pity a sem-

inary or college where they are not felt and encouraged and used. Such a stirring up and warming up and blossoming out had come to Oxonian Hall. After the students and faculty had left the chapel, and the last notes of the organ had died away, Mark, so absorbed in thought as to forget to leave, found himself alone in the dim twilight. How silent the place! How solemn the hour! All that passed through his soul then we cannot record here. But I know that bowing down alone in the darkness he whispered a deep, strong, soul-surrendering prayer. The whispers now and then broke into groans. The conflict was fearful, the surrender was full, the victory was perfect, the peace that came into the young student's soul seemed to him like a miracle. "I will live for thee, O Christ," he cried. "I will live for the world thou camest to redeem. Away, Ambition! Away, selfishness, and envy, and all evil desires! I do here and now, in the name of Christ, surrender myself to thee, O Father of heaven and earth! I enter into an everlasting covenant with thee, and with all true souls, to love and serve

thee and to prove my love for thee by serving my fellow-man!" Mark rose from his knees. The silence was profound, and the sense of the divine presence was overwhelming. Through one of the open windows of the chapel he caught sight of the new moon. The familiar crescent with its silver light had new beauty to his eyes that night. Nature receives an added charm when souls who study it are brought into harmony with the God of nature. A new life had been given to Mark and a new career opened before him. The young and growing moon had a meaning. That night he wrote to his mother.

After this wonderful experience Mark moved steadily forward. He had work to do. He did it faithfully and well. He had seasons of storm and doubt and darkness. He repeated his vow of surrender, remembered the Christ of his salvation, read the word of God regularly, associated with those who had committed themselves to the same service. Thus he passed safely through every season of depression. "I built that night on God, not on frames and feelings," he said. The religious interest at Oxonian Hall

was followed by much discussion among the students concerning church membership. More than one student approached Mark to secure his name as a candidate for enrollment in this church or that. Mark was decided, and gave prompt answer: "My father and mother brought me up in the Methodist Episcopal Church." A Roman Catholic friend wrote him about that Church. A class-mate who belonged to the Protestant Episcopal Church used strong arguments, as he supposed, why Mark should join that denomination. Other "branches" stretched their boughs over into Mark's neighborhood, but he invariably said, "I was born into a Methodist Episcopal family. I believe in my own Church. When I have examined farther and fully, and find that I cannot conscientiously stay there, I will seek another fold. But now I stay with my own." So Mark stayed and examined. He reviewed church history, studied church polity, read religious biography, gave answers to his Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal friends—answers I am sorry not to have space here to record—and every day grew

broader as a Christian and more positive and earnest as a Methodist. He wrote to his mother, "I love all branches of the Christian Church as they try to set forth Jesus Christ himself, his doctrines, his ethics, his Spirit. The demand of the age is the simple teachings and life of Christ reproduced every day in our several spheres of life and influence. This philosophy makes me a Methodist. Our Church seems to me most like the early Church. I read the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles, and feel more at home in the Church I have chosen." And thus Mark stood up for his own Church with intelligent fidelity. His manliness and decision gave much strength to the other students. He said one evening in a "converts' class," as it was called, "We should not separate culture from religious life, education from grace. We should be Christian students. We should bring our intellectual energies into the service of the Church. Let us form a 'League' devoted to the sanctification of our educational opportunities, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, the study of church history and economics, and the promotion of a large,

full-orbed, spiritual, philanthropic, and church life."

The proposal was accepted by the students, "The Oxford League of Oxonian Hall" organized, and from that day onward the Methodist Episcopal Church gained in interest and influence in that institution. I cannot here report all the discussions and essays, the committees and their work, the ante-communion services, the "conference debates," the rich biographical *résumés* from Methodist history, the able arguments on "the extemporaneous instead of the liturgical form of worship," the "itinerancy," the "class-meeting," and a score of denominational topics, which occupied one evening a week in the chapel of Oxonian Hall. A young Methodist girl from —— city said to a friend, "I was never so proud of my own Church as since I have learned more of her history, opinions, and achievements." A young Congregationalist said, "If you Methodist people would let every body know what you do believe, and let your young folks know, and what God has done for you and what a work is yet to be done by

you, your power would be immensely augmented." Mark, who was leader of the League, said, "If we will only study God's word and give ourselves to culture for God's glory and for man's good we need not care what any body thinks of us. As for myself," he said, "I have scientific tastes. I shall be a chemist. I shall try to be a good one. And I shall find satisfaction in connecting my work and my good name, if I can win it, and my success with the Church I belong to and love. As Bishop Simpson once said, 'I live to make my own Church a power in the land, while I live to love every church that loves and exalts Christ.'" So much for Mark and the league. On another page I give the outline of Mark's address at the formal organization of the "Oxford League of Oxonian Hall." Will not Methodist Episcopal students in our several institutions organize similar leagues?

"THE OXFORD LEAGUE OF OXONIAN HALL."

THE voluntary on the organ having ended, a hymn was sung by the congregation that packed the chapel. It was the strong, rich, spiritual hymn beginning, "Arise, my soul, arise." Prayer was offered by the President of Oxonian Hall, who then introduced Mr. Mark —— as "Leader of the Oxford League of Oxonian Hall." Mark was received with cheers, and proceeded to deliver an address of which the following is merely an outline:

1. Love for all Christian believers in all branches of the Church of Christ should be by each believer genuine and abounding.

2. Love, to be true, must never be disloyal to truth, nor must it, for fear of giving offense, fail to testify against error.

3. We most effectually testify against error by boldly and faithfully proclaiming the whole truth. We should not aim to build up our own school of religious thought by tearing others down.

4. The Methodist Episcopal Church, with which all members of the Oxford League are connected, has all the marks of the original and apostolic Church.

5. Methodism, therefore, really began in the days of Christ and of the apostles.

6. Methodism is not, however, the only representative of apostolic Christianity. She claims to be one of the many branches of the true Holy Catholic Church.

7. The revival of Methodism in the last century was a blessing to all branches of the Church.

8. The Methodism of the last century began in Oxford University, and among men of the highest culture.

9. True Methodism has always favored intellectual training.

10. The great demand of this age is a more thorough culture in subordination to a tender, sympathetic, philanthropic, and vigorous piety accompanied by a present personal consciousness of harmony with God.

11. Young Methodist Episcopal students in our Church institutions should seek Christly character and the highest human culture, aiming at high scholarship in the various departments of learning and using it in the service and to the honor of our own Church, as laymen, as teachers, and as ministers of the Gospel.

12. These ends will be subserved by the organization of an Oxford League, which aims to secure Christian experience, Bible knowledge, sound general education and habits of practical philanthropy. It aims also to promote a higher appreciation of the divine origin, history, organization, usages, advantages, and most pressing necessities of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

XI.

HARRY.

"Ashamed of Jesus?"

HARRY was a fine-looking fellow; a well-dressed and handsome fellow, evidently refined in his tastes, and certainly agreeable in manners: a graduate of H—— University, and now a teacher. It was easy to drop into a conversation with him. He was attractive and, after the last word, left a pleasant impression. Such agreeable acquaintance a Pullman parlor car occasionally affords.

Harry talked freely. He had his tastes and opinions; knew much about the leading colleges of the day and their peculiar views and policies; was not a believer in the elective scheme, nor yet fully satisfied with the rigorous and old-time classic *régime*. He was "*not* a Methodist." He was partly Congregational and partly "Episcopal;" liked one more than the

other, and went to either or both according to circumstances. He was "not a Methodist." He said that twice.

As our conversation continued Harry betrayed a singular familiarity for a young college man, and a Congregationalist or "Episcopalian," with Methodist Episcopal names and ways. He knew the editors and the church papers. He spoke of class-meetings and Conferences. He saw the name of "Cranston & Stowe" on a paper we held, and remarked,

"That used to be 'Hitchcock & Walden,' didn't it?"

We saw that he was at home in the nomenclature of Methodism, and asked,

"Were you not brought up in a Methodist Episcopal family?"

He answered: "Yes; all my life, until recently. I am not now a Methodist. Our whole family was Methodist until a very short time ago. But we left."

We found out why. For all action there is a reason. Harry left Methodism because his father did. His father and family left on the occasion

of a church trouble. We inferred that the "trouble" was the occasion, and not the cause, of the leaving. It was a good time to go. They went. We probed Harry still further and found that he was quite willing to go—glad to go. We tried to find out why he was glad. We succeeded. Harry "didn't like prayer-meetings and revivals." He "didn't like responses in meeting" —unless they were printed in a book. He didn't like "working on the emotions." Besides, there were a "good many common people in the Church," and "common people are not agreeable, you know." Then Harry smiled a pleasant smile, and twisted his light—light-weight, light-shade—mustache and looked out of the car window like "a high-born fellow, you know."

We did not give Harry up, for he was a most agreeable talker, and seemed to be in earnest, and was willing to discuss matters. We gave him our views about revivals. We conceded the occurrence now and then of uncomfortable episodes in religious meetings, where liberty of speech and entire extemporaneousness in prayer are allowed; where weak people and impulsive

people and hysterical people have a right to express themselves; where personal joy over personal salvation finds a tongue and is permitted to tell about the lifting of burdens, and the scattering of clouds, and the healing of wounds, and the banishing of despair, and the triumph of hope, and where this expression does sometimes shatter the college boy's rules of grammar and the society man's canons of taste. Would Harry forbid this freedom? Would he stop the mouth of a reformed drunkard, or the glad utterances of the reformed drunkard's wife, or a song of victory over the assurance of divine acceptance? Allowing the experience to be real, would he forbid the expression? "Certainly not," but then he "liked silence." In the cemetery of his native town Harry could find—silence. But then he could also find it, and for the same reason, in some churches.

The æsthetic element in Harry was very strongly developed. It usually, is in young people of a certain kind and degree of culture. If they are society people this development is more marked and its influence very great. They

don't like any thing that is "out of taste," or that certain frigid and worldly people pronounce to be "out of taste." It offends them. They are ashamed to have any thing occur in any of their meetings that savors of emotion, or that violates laws of accurate speech, or that "nice people" would laugh at.

Such æsthetic youths would have a hard time in war. It would be "dreadful" to have to stay away from all the modern conveniences and to be compelled to live in such rough ways. How "awful" hospital ministries would be! What vulgar things have to be done there! Kitchen-work is so much "out of taste," and helping mother care for baby, and going to the grocery, and watching by old auntie dying with cancer! What perfectly terrible violations of taste in the days of Christ, when blind men called out to him, and mothers crowded forward with their children for a blessing, and lepers praised him, and children shouted "Hosanna!" and people spread garments and palm-branches in the way. And he—the Christ—approved it all.

We tried to show Harry that "taste" is a very

selfish and a very dangerous thing when carried too far, and that it is easy to carry it too far; that reality, sturdy reality, sometimes allows and requires things which weak "propriety" condemns; that true work for men, bold, rugged, manly, merciful, divine work for men, must care very little for conventionalities; that men who save souls, like men who save nations, must break loose from such pettiness and do manful work in heroic way. We told him that Methodist ministers, as a class, whatever may be said about largeness or lack of "culture," were preeminently men of profound earnestness and plain, bold speech and sound common sense, and that they were, through their very vigor and loyalty to reality, in danger of depreciating the little conceits and temporary decrees of æstheticism. As for these men, they could not stay in a cemetery. If they did stones would speak, graves open, and the dead come forth. We made Harry ashamed of his "taste" and "Lubin" and dilettanteism, as he began to think of the heroic faith and good sense and unflinching purpose to do good and bring souls into the eter-

nal heaven which characterize the Church and ministry he and his family had forsaken.

The "emotion" troubled Harry. Well, hysterical emotion and manufactured emotion and uncontrolled emotion sometimes trouble us. But there is a true emotion. Liberty cannot be given to the true without making way for the display of the false. And it is better to have a little wild-fire than to smother the real fire. Where would Harry find life without emotion: Among his college class-mates? On the base-ball ground? At the boat-race? At a cane rush? On the campus when the songs began? At the class supper? Where would he find freedom from emotion? Among school-boys? In the court-room? In a nursery? At the theater? Among tourists in Switzerland? At a political meeting? In Congress? Where? There is one place—among the permanent residents of a cemetery. But Harry wants emotion repressed in only one place—a church meeting, where, if anywhere on earth, emotion is fitting and necessary; where those themes are discussed which are more likely than any other to awaken

the noblest and most effective emotions of the soul; where there cannot be thought or conviction without emotion; where to be alive is to be subject to the play of emotion. Harry wants the Church to be a cemetery with tombs and tablets and columns and art and—silence! Ah! Harry, you don't know what the Church is for, nor what it holds in its heart, nor how it came to be, nor who reigns over it. If you want silence, broken only by conventional or liturgic provision, don't go back to Pentecost. Don't try to bring back the day of the Master's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Don't go to Methodist meetings. Don't pass the gates of the celestial city, where

> "rush of hallelujahs
> Fills all the earth and sky!"

and where

> "'Hallelujah'" they cry,
> To the King of the sky,
> To the great everlasting I AM;
> To the Lamb that was slain,
> And that liveth again,—
> 'Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!"

As for the objection based upon the presence

of "the common people," Harry did not press it very strongly after we had shown our colors on the æsthetic question. He saw it could not weigh with us. We believe in common sense and ruggedness of soul and thorough work, and in the democratic ideas of Christianity. Harry was afraid we might quote texts out of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ—such as, "The common people heard him gladly," and "He ate with publicans and sinners." Perhaps Harry remembered the commission given by the Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Or he may have recalled the fact that the disciples at the beginning were "common people," and that the majority of the earliest believers were *very* "common people." Or, it may be, Harry feared that we might reach back by a simple question into his own ancestry. And we might reach back too far; or, not reaching very far, might find a fact or two of an exceedingly plain sort, and break a high, stiff Cambridge collar of the present by a rude grip on a collarless shirt-band of the past. Perhaps Harry talked about "com-

mon people" with his peculiar tone when he was some distance from home, or to people who did not know him and his at home—the home of the family to-day or a quarter of a century back. However that may be, Harry did not push the plebeian question any further. With his good sense—and he has a good stratum of it under the deposit of taste and social ambition—Harry cannot argue against a church because it has "common people" in it. That argument would have kept many a senator out of the Capitol, many a judge out of the Supreme Court, many a President out of the White House, many a millionaire out of his parlor, many a lady out of society, and many a saint out of heaven. But for the "common people" we should have neither wealth nor scholarship. The man who depreciates them is chargeable with folly, and the Church that neglects them is guilty of a great crime—a crime against God and against the Saviour who died for all men, every-where.

XII.

ETHEL.

"Good sense is sister to good taste."

ETHEL SETTIQUE had French blood in her veins, and a strong taste for the things which were pronounced "in good taste." Very often when there was no stronger argument in favor of a thing than that it was in "good taste" she at least for a time approved it, even when her native good sense opposed it. She had both very strong sense and a very high degree of æsthetic sensitiveness. All who know any thing about the combination in one individuality well know that it precipitates many an interior controversy, in which one person is broken into two; that the two are sure to fight for a long time over the problem which has been submitted to the Unity, and that the problem cannot be adjusted until there has been a prolonged scuffle between what we may be allowed to call the Duality. Now Ethel Settique was a Unity in Duality or a Duality in Unity.

If she was French she was neither flippant nor fickle. We know the reputation that people give the nation, and we think it unfair. But there is little use in fighting against these universal reputations. In Ethel's case we are careful to put in a modifying statement, seeing that there was a trace of French blood in the swift, full streams that swept through her veins. And she was a Methodist. She always said she was a "Methodist Episcopalian." And she put emphasis on the "Episcopalian," although, to tell the truth, she was at the last remove from the traditional Episcopalian. She says frankly that she is a "Methodist EPISCOPALIAN," with double-underscore-for-caps (the compositor at least will understand us), because she is NOT any other kind of Episcopalian. She believes in the Episcopal form of government. She believes in two "orders" only (and that will certainly delight Dr. Neely), and in the Episcopacy as an "office," and as an office full of dignity and honor. She likes to point to her "Bishop" and show what power he has—a power that he does not get from an "order," or from antiquity, but

from the Church that is, and from the work that he does, and from the *manhood* under the Bishop, and from the LORD himself, who, as she believes, directs in the selection of Bishops. She is a great enthusiast on the Episcopacy—is Ethel Settique.

She has a young friend who is as much of a Protestant Episcopalian as Ethel is an Episcopalian of the—right sort. And they discuss matters, generally with great good nature. When they do get warmed up and talk like—preachers, which, seeing that they are only lay members of the Church, they ought not to do, they soon get reconciled and kiss each other and "make up," and—begin again. They discuss "orders" and "succession" and "taste" and, which is more important, the "preaching" or the "praying," and all those subjects that will come up when a new-fashioned Protestant Episcopalian and an old-fashioned Methodist Episcopalian get together. And of course "the liturgy" comes up, and the distinction between "reading prayers" and "praying." We are sorry not to be able to put down in black and white all that they did

say one afternoon when they had a "peaceful quarrel," as Ethel called it, over the "liturgy." They really had all the old arguments, pro and con. It was a lively discussion. It was begun by Ethel's friend, who indorsed the views of Dr. ——, editor of the ——, on the liturgy. She got the reading of the —— through her intelligent Protestant Episcopal rector, who took it regularly "because it is so strong and bright and frank." The editor in the editorial referred to says: "The Discipline contemplates a participation of the communicants with the minister in the repetition of the Confession. It should always be done. Here no objection to a liturgy can be alleged. The effect is solemn and impressive to a high degree. The writer tried the method of reading it for several years, the people being silent; then requested them to join in the Confession, and the latter was every way to be preferred." "So you see," said Ethel's friend, "that your people are gradually coming around to a liturgy." It was at that particular moment we should like to have had Ethel's face painted by a real artist.

"Coming around to a liturgy indeed!" and there were some lines of noble irony drawn in the child's fine face. "Coming around to a liturgy! We have always had a liturgy. We began with it very much as you Protestant Episcopalians have it now, and soon grew out of its bondage. We use it on occasions. We accept it as exceptional. We believe in the idea of a form, but we believe more in freedom. There is a certain educating value in classic prayers, but they may shut the soul against the free play of spiritual influence by their very beauty, and they may foster a critical habit to such a degree as to render one insensible to the sweetness and power of a spontaneous prayer, because its expression is not according to classic standards. No, no, I know too much about the dwarfing and binding power of 'taste' to justify the use of an invariable form." Ethel grew eloquent in her defense of the extemporaneous order of her beloved Church. "But," said her friend, "your Church is growing more and more fond of forms of prayer." Ethel replied: "The opposite is true. In England, where in some

Wesleyan chapels the old liturgy according to Mr. Wesley's custom is still used, the people on the whole dislike it, and many absent themselves from the chapel until just before the sermon, in order to avoid the liturgy. Methodists can never be liturgists. There is not a minister in the Church in America, as far as I know, who advocates the use of a form of prayer except on special occasions." "You do read Scripture in concert," said her friend. Ethel replied, "To some extent. The participative service in which Scripture is read responsively is in many places used in public service and Sunday-school, but nowhere to the exclusion or reduction of the extemporaneous prayer. I believe our ministers and superintendents would to a man give up even that if they saw any tendency to a set liturgy. It is not in the genius of Methodism to be liturgical, much less ritualistic. The editor's concession which you quoted is not in favor of the liturgy, for I happen to know that the editor is a loyal Methodist Episcopalian, and does not believe in the use of a liturgy beyond the present provisions of the Discipline. By

that he stands. And so do I." And Ethel smiled to think what she had almost compared herself to by classing herself with so great a man as Dr. ——. But with all her "taste," and love of order, and desire to increase an interest on the part of young people and children in the church service, she is heartily opposed to set forms, liturgical tendencies, aud quartette choirs. She wants the people to feel at home in all Methodist Episcopal churches, to sing heartily, to pray spontaneously, to read God's word aloud if they want to, and even in using the Lord's Prayer to speak it out each for himself without trying to keep with the minister or with the other people, knowing that when a great congregation is thoroughly interested its individuals will by an irresistible law of sympathy keep together, and that without thinking about it. Of course we do have Sunday-school concert services, and employ Christmas-trees and flowers and banners, which in a regular church service we might condemn, just as a lecturer would tell funny stories in an off-hand platform speech which he would never think of introducing into

the sermon. "I believe," said Ethel, "that if our people saw the slightest tendency toward formalism and ritualism in these things they would give them all up, even the observance of Christmas-day." Ethel is right. What Methodism needs is spontaneity governed by common sense, and by the ordinary measure of good taste which common sense always has, and which it always keeps in wise subjection. So thinks our little French friend, Ethel Settique. And the writer of these lines fully agrees with her.

XIII.

THE STORY OF A REVIVAL.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

THERE were to be "special meetings" in the Methodist Episcopal Church of ———. One might be tempted to think that the regular meetings of that church were enough to take up the time and excite the interest of the people in the congregation and community without instituting a series of "special" meetings. The church had two "classes" meeting at 9 o'clock every Sunday morning; preaching at 10:30 A. M.; Sunday-school at 2:30 P. M.; young people's prayer-meeting at 6:30, and preaching again at 7:30 P. M. On Monday night there was an "official meeting;" Tuesday night, three "class-meetings;" Wednesday night, general prayer-meeting; Thursday night, two "class-meetings;" Friday night, two cottage prayer-meetings and young people's prayer-meeting; and on Saturday night choir practice. One may be excused for thinking that the "regular meetings are

enough." So thought and so said Herbert S. Topatome, a young fellow of good family in the Methodist Episcopal Church of ———, in the —— District of the ——— Annual Conference.

Herbert heard the minister announce the "special" meetings one pleasant Sunday morning in May, and, being of a mathematical turn of mind, Herbert at the dinner-table counted the services of the week in their church. The result was as follows, beginning with the two classes on Sunday morning and closing with the choir-meeting on Saturday evening: Two, plus one, plus one, plus one, plus one, equal six services for Sabbath. For the week-days one, plus three, plus one, plus two, plus three, plus one, equal eleven. Six Sunday, plus eleven week-day services, equal seventeen church services a week. Multiply seventeen by fifty-two and the result is eight hundred and eighty-four religious services in a year. "What is the use," asked our young Methodist Episcopal mathematician, "of *special* meetings?" Father Topatome was pleased with his son's wisdom, and smiled because he saw in it wit as well as wisdom, and

added, "If in the seventy-five families of our church there were family prayer only once every day it would make twenty-seven thousand and three hundred prayers a year, in addition to the regular eight hundred and eighty-four services of the church; making a total of twenty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-four 'regular' services in one year." Then he smiled a self-complacent smile at Herbert and said, "I don't see, my son, any use for special services." And both Herbert and his father took a swallow of good, strong, after-dinner coffee and winked at each other. It is so witty to be wise!

Hattie, the oldest girl of the Topatome household, only thirteen years of age, was as bright as Herbert, as good a mathematician, and a better Methodist. She listened in the morning with solemn attention to the sermon and with gratitude to the minister's announcement of the special services. At dinner she heard with a wounded heart the heartless and frivolous criticisms and calculations of Herbert and her father. She was silent for a few moments, and as the worldly-minded pair laughed at the "special

meetings," "and revivals," and "evangelists," she collected her thoughts, lifted her heart to Heaven for a breath of help, and then asked Herbert how many of the seventeen regular services he had attended that week. By her assistance Herbert counted—*two*. "And you, father?" asked Hattie. After a bit of raillery and evasion he, by her aid and yielding to her pressure, said, "One—I was at church Sunday morning." "Father," continued the ardent and loyal girl, "if the seventy-five families of our church had family prayer just as often as we did last week, how many family prayer services were there out of the possible five hundred and twenty-five? And if last week's family devotions in our house be the standard in our church for the year, how many family prayers would there be this year out of the estimated twenty-seven thousand three hundred?" Now, last week there was no family prayer in the Topatome house. And although Mr. Topatome's father did have family prayer regularly, and although Topatome himself believed in it and did once in a while—more rarely than he knew—

have Sunday morning family worship, the whole company at the table, when crowded by Hattie to tell when they had kneeled in prayer at the family altar, were compelled to acknowledge that it had been weeks and months since the family Bible had been brought out and used in a devotional service of any kind. Herbert wanted to "talk about something else," and his father thought that "if the church would attend to its regular duties we should not need special services," and suggested that he "must take a Sunday afternoon nap." But Hattie was not to be silenced, and as she inherited no small measure of her father's force she insisted upon saying her say. And this is substantially what she said:

"The church has regular services. Herbert and you say that in one week there are seventeen of them, or eight hundred and eighty-four a year. In the seventy-five homes of our church there may be twenty-seven thousand three hundred family prayers a year, making a grand total of twenty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-four. That sounds large, and to say it,

seems wise, and from the way Herbert smiles over it I think he considers it wondrous witty; but I consider it both weak and wicked. Forgive me, father, but you tell me to be 'a true and simple-hearted girl,' and dear old grandfather, who always had family prayer, told me before he died that 'piety was the best ornament a woman could wear,' and dear dead mother told me to 'stand true to the Church and to the Lord Jesus, who is its Head and Life.' Therefore you must hear me. Herbert, according to your own arithmetic, attends two and you one out of the possible seventeen services a week. And as to family prayer, you made a sad mistake in referring to it, for if other members are like the Topatomes there is next to no family prayer in the church. See where your arithmetic puts you: In the —— church twenty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-four possible regular services a year. S. Topatome attends fifty-two of them. The difference between fifty-two and twenty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-four is just twenty-eight thousand one hundred and thirty-two."

Then Aunt Sarah, who is very amiable, and as wise as she is amiable, said, "We hold 'special' meetings to awaken the church to the value of the 'regular' meetings, and to promote regular religious service in the church and the family. Until the 'regular' services are appreciated and observed the 'special' will be necessary. I think the mathematical arguments of the dinner-table are as twenty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-four to fifty-two, or as five hundred and forty-one to one in favor of special meetings." And here the company broke up. But this was not the end.

The special meetings in ——— church began according to the pastor's announcement. An evangelist who had both taste and common sense to balance an earnest heart came to the pastor's assistance. There were special services held every day. A morning Bible reading and prayer-meeting, an afternoon meeting for children and youth, and an evening sermon, followed by altar service or inquiry meeting. For six

weeks—well into the summer—this series continued. Three meetings were not held every day, but there were for the six weeks many more meetings than usual. There was little objectionable demonstration and no excessive excitement. Sixty persons, some old, some young, became "probationers;" a large number of backsliders were reclaimed, and the Church was quickened. Our interest centers not in the church, but in the home of Herbert and Hattie and their father.

Herbert's scorn grew apace with the increase of popular interest in the meetings. When the general character of the services came under discussion in the stores, street-cars and parlors of the place, Herbert took sides in a most lordly manner against the "fanaticism of the evangelists," and reported at table in an irritating way what was said by Mr. Soandso and Mrs. Thisorthat, putting into their unfavorable remarks all the contempt that could find escape under the shadow of his callow mustache. At first he grieved and then almost enraged his sister, who had a very human heart and a high sense of

justice, along with simplicity of faith and a true reverence for holy things. She held her peace, however, and allowed Herbert to talk and sneer and lay up fuel for flame of repentance later on. He said so much and recurred to the subject so frequently that his father one day remarked, "I shall expect to see you a ranting saint some day, my son. You fight like Saul of Tarsus."

"What I hate is the excitement," remarked Herbert, one morning at breakfast.

"What excitement?" asked Hattie.

"That revival excitement. I was in a while last evening. I think it outrageous to make such a row over religion."

Hattie answered in her quiet way, "I was there last night, but discovered no excessive demonstration. I thought the meeting very quiet indeed."

"I am sure," answered Herbert, "that the preacher was very much warmed up. And he said some extravagant things."

"None of which I can recall," replied his sister. "The sermon was clear, convincing, practical and strong."

Aunt Sarah ventured in her mild way to ask Herbert if he "had really found as much excitement as he expected;" and his father, who was not a little impressed by the sermon of last evening and much hurt at Herbert's unreasonableness, added, "And would you not have liked it a little better if there had been more noise and demonstration? Would you not have been gratified by some absurd occurrence which you might have reported here this morning? I frankly confess," continued his father, "there was nothing to which I could possibly take exception last night. There was no noise. There was no interruption at any moment of any speaker or leader in prayer. My son, are you a slave to prejudice?" Herbert being in the minority, even his father having deserted him, and being compelled to confess to himself (never so quietly) that he was a little prejudiced, dropped the subject for the time, and the family was scattered for the work of the day.

Herbert S. Topatome was ill at ease. Underneath his gay exterior and dashing manner Herbert had a conscience. He knew the "let-

ter" of the Holy Scriptures, and had caught glimpses of its spiritual meanings. His mother had placed her dying hand on his head and spoken a few very solemn words to him, which had been well-nigh forgotten in the whirl of society and the imperious demands of business. His father's indifference had deadened his religious sensibilities. He believed theoretically in religion, but in religion as an actual factor in every-day life he had no interest. It was good for Sundays, good for church services, good for sick-rooms, good for women, and good for funerals, but he preferred religion in books and sermons and sacraments, and did not want it to interfere with his fun, occupy his time, head him off from social indulgencies of every kind, or in any way come in between Herbert and Herbert's self-gratification. He sometimes regretted that his father was a Methodist. "I wish our family had been something else," he said. "I wish we were Episcopalians. They don't care what young people do. But Methodists are so fearfully strict and exacting."

Then came to him the picture of his dying

mother; her white face and wonderful smile; the tones of her voice so remarkably sweet and clear; the words of pleading she uttered, and then the last glance from the closing eyes, a sudden smile, a breath, a silence—O, how long that silence! Herbert remembered that she had been a Methodist, liberal, high-minded, patient, refined, self-sacrificing, fond of her own Church, and in fullest sympathy with its spirit and regulations. Thus his mother held him to the Church of her youth and age. Mothers do have this power of control. It does not end when they fall asleep and go into their graves. Indeed, mother is sometimes most eloquent and her influence most effective after her lips are sealed in death.

It is a great thing to be a true mother. It is a great thing for the Church where mothers are loyal to it. These facts and reflections will prepare us to appreciate the struggles in Herbert's soul as he shut the door of his home that morning and hurried down town, to forget, in the excitement of buisness, himself and his "morbid feelings," and the irritating conviction of the breakfast-table.

Mr. Brand, the teller in Mr. Topatome's bank, who had always sympathized with Herbert's dislike for "obtrusive, demonstrative, and experimental religion," had himself been at the meeting the night before, and had "risen for prayers" and had stayed to the "after-meeting." He had been powerfully impressed by the arguments and appeals of the evangelists, and had taken a step which he had thought he could never under any circumstances take. He had yielded to the inner voice and openly proclaimed his unrest of soul, and had professed a desire to come out before the world as a seeker of the Christ-like spirit. By a very rapid movement of thought and will, under the divine guidance, he had come out of darkness into light. His convictions were sharp, his desire genuine, his resolve prompt and positive, his faith simple; and before ten o'clock that evening Brand, the captious and worldly, full of doubt and fond of caviling, had been brought into the clear light of a religious experience. He said to the minister after the meeting: "It is all wonderful to me. I doubted, but now I believe; I scoffed, but now

I praise; I knew in a general way the truths of the Gospel, but they never took hold of me as they have to-night, and now I shall live for higher objects. I am through with doubt and self-gratification. I am through with the indulgences which the Church and the world both call worldly, and I am determined, by God's help, to live for something worthy of the immortal soul." These were words of honesty and of sharp conviction.

Brand meant what he said, and when Herbert S. Topatome came into the bank the morning after, he was surprised at the greeting given him by the teller.

"Are you crazy, Brand?" he asked.

"Wild," said Brand. "I believe I could go shouting through these streets this morning." And the smile on his face quickly told Herbert that his old companion had found "peace." Somehow the smile reminded Herbert of his mother's smile when she lay with the gates of heaven opening above her.

To parry the stroke which Brand's new movement had aimed at Herbert the young

fellow asked, "Are you beside yourself, Brand?" He did not wait for an answer. In his inmost soul he coveted the peace that Brand had found; but his nature was full of resistance and pride, and in that soil "objections do most rankly grow."

Mr. Brand had been "converted." He had "turned over a new leaf." He had "come to himself" and returned to his heavenly Father's presence and favor. He had begun "a new life." He was "going to be a Christian and a Methodist." These are some of the expressions on the tongues of saint and sinner in the community as the news of Brand's surrender to God was reported. It was a remarkable change in a good sort of a man, who was well-known in the village, and it was accepted as proof that the "work" was genuine and the evangelist sent of God. The logic may not have been flawless, but the facts were impressive, and not a few skeptics were struck dumb.

Hattie was happy enough when the news reached her. It was a great triumph of grace. It was a vindication of the "revival" efforts

which the Church she loved had put forth. It was a new agency likely to help her in her prayers and labors for Herbert. It turned his arguments into ashes. For a time it took all the scorn out of his lips and voice. How much one soul can do! Brand was a thoughtful and well-read man. His very silence on religious subjects had fortified Herbert's growing skepticism. His common sense justified the young fellow's contempt for excitement. Herbert would reason with himself, "Here's Brand. Nothing of the kind moves him. He is a scholar, and a level-headed fellow, and has force of character. If there were any thing in religion he would approve it. As it is, he ignores it, and sometimes laughs at it." But now Brand had deserted him; had gone over to the ranters; had taken sides with preacher, evangelist and the Church; had himself gone into talking religion, and praying, and setting good examples. The change was a salutary one for Herbert. No wonder that Hattie was happy over it!

"It is a mere impulse," said Herbert.

"Brand wont hold out. A few days from now he will be regretting it. So it will be with the majority of the converts." So spoke Sir Herbert to "Saint Hattie," as he called her. "Regret what?" asked the saint. "Having made a fool of himself in this public way," answered the sage.

"Now, Herbert, let us look at that for a minute," she said; "let us see how he has made a fool of himself. What has Brand done? He has acknowledged frankly in a public way and heartily the following facts:

1. That there is a God, above all, author of all, who has a right to the love and obedience of his creatures.

2. That there is a life beyond the grave, where we shall continue to know and love, and where character will determine what we do and enjoy.

3. That the true life on earth is the life that is wisest, most loyal to duty, most full of faith in God and practical love for men.

4. That the Bible is God's revelation of himself, of his will, of human duty and privilege.

5. That according to its teachings every man ought to repent of his sins, serve God, try to live according to the standards of the Book, and make his earthly life a sphere of preparation for eternal life. Now where is the folly of faith in these five propositions? I cannot see it. Can you?" Herbert did not confess it openly, but really he could not see the folly he had charged upon his friend.

And as for the public demonstrations to which Herbert took exceptions, Hattie reminded him how like the talk of some of the old Pharisees in the temple his talk was, and she drew a picture of Herbert trying in the days of Christ to stop the hosannas of the people when Christ entered the city in triumph. She then told him to apply his rule on the base-ball ground, and at lawn tennis, and in politics. In this way the dear child spoke more eloquently and effectively than she herself knew, and Herbert went down town with an angered and somewhat hardened heart.

New victories at the evening meetings increased the power of the revival movement, and correspondingly increased the burden on

poor Herbert's soul. Brand was more cheerful than ever, and withal more profoundly earnest. The man was a changed man. Every body saw it. To no one was it more clear than to Herbert, who tried in every possible way to catch the new convert in some inconsistency or to silence him by some argument. Brand, under the sweet influence of unselfish love, was not easily betrayed into any word or act which was contrary to love; and as for argument, Brand was on the right side, and poor Herbert's weak cavils could not stand against the words of truth and soberness.

"It may be," said Brand, "that some of us will go back. Poor human nature does often recede from advanced and true positions. It does this in every thing else, why is it not possible in religion? This is no argument against the divinity of religion. It shows the weakness of human nature, and proves that the freedom and responsibility of man are recognized in the Bible. Suppose I do go back. I have had a taste of the better life, and what I am for a short time I should be—and may be—all

the time. The brief experience makes it the more likely that I shall return to it. Is it not better that I should have the brief experience? Is it not better for a man to be sober for six weeks than never sober? Will not the specimen of sober life be an incentive to a return to sobriety later on? Ah, my young Herbert, you are walking in a dangerous path."

These burning words did not subdue the heart of Herbert. We wish we could report his turning unto the Lord. The meetings closed. Brand went one way and Herbert another. So is it in life. So shall it be in eternity. We do not despair of Herbert. But some souls need severe discipline before they surrender. It may be so with him. Hattie must pray on and Brand live on and ministers preach on; and mother's memory must still come into the poor wanderer's dreams. And some day we have hope that he will relent and repent and return. But it is for us to do our work and put our faith in God, and awaken men to duty. God has his plans. We have our appointments. Let us trust, and serve, and wait.

APPENDIX.

THE claim of the Ritualists is, that there are three distinct *orders* in the ministry, and that the highest, that of bishops, is in direct succession from the apostles. Methodist Episcopalians claim that there is no such "apostolic succession," except in doctrine, spirit, and life; that "bishops" and "elders" (presbyters) were, in the New Testament, of the same order: that elders (presbyters) have a right to set apart of their own to the *office* of bishop; and that when John Wesley, a duly ordained elder (presbyter) of the Church of England, assisted by other Church of England elders, set apart Thomas Coke as superintendent (*episcopos*, bishop,) he exercised a right conferred upon him when he was ordained presbyter by John Potter, Bishop of Oxford; a right for which precedents abound in Church history. One might fill whole pages with testimony on these points. I give here a few extracts:

Irenæus declares that the succession, and together with it the episcopate also, had, down to this day (latter part of second century), descended through a series of presbyters, not of bishops. According to the testimony of this father—the best witness concerning the point in question—the powers now existing in the ministry of the Church are merely presbyterian, not episcopal.

Jerome (in his note on Titus, chapter first) says: "Presbyters and bishops were formerly the same. . . . Let the bishops know that they are above presbyters rather by custom than by the

divine appointment, and that the Church ought to be ruled in common."

Augustine says: "The office of a bishop is above the office of a priest (not by the authority of Scripture), but after the names of honor which the custom of the Church hath now obtained."

The celebrated *Laud* says: "I do not find any one of the ancient fathers that makes local, personal, visible, and continued succession a necessary sign or mark of the Church in any one place. . . . Most evident it is that the succession which the fathers meant is not tied to place or person, *but it is tied to verity of doctrine.*"

Bishop Stillingfleet says: "The succession so much pleaded by the writers of the primitive Church was not a succession of persons in apostolic power, *but a succession in apostolic doctrine.* We see evidently that it is the doctrine which they speak of as to succession, and persons no further than as they are conveyors of that doctrine."

Bishop Babbington says: "They are the true successors of the apostles that succeed in virtue, holiness, truth, etc., not that sit on the same stool. Faith cometh by hearing, saith St. Paul (not by succession), and hearing cometh (not by legacy or inheritance from bishop to bishop) but by the word of God."

John Wesley wrote, February 25, 1785: "Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England, and is now visiting the flock in the middle provinces of America, settling them *on the New Testament plan*, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform, being all united as by one spirit so in one body."

In justification of his action in thus setting apart Dr. Coke, John Wesley says: "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England or Europe, for the uninter-

rupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

On January 20, 1746, he writes in his Journal: "I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's account of the primitive Church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draft; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order.

Dr. Edgeworth, of the Church of England, says: "The priests (elders) in the primitive Church made bishops, and even like as soldiers should choose one among themselves to be their captain, so did priests (elders) choose one of themselves to be their bishop for consideration of his learning, gravity, and good living."

Eutychius, a patriarch or bishop in Egypt, says: "The twelve presbyters constituted by Mark upon the vacancy of the see chose out of their number one to be head over the rest, and the eleven laid their hands on him, and blest him, and made him patriarch."

Dr. Holland, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, says: "To affirm the office of bishop to be different from that of presbyter, and superior to, it is most false—contrary to Scripture and the fathers, to the doctrines of the Church of England and the very schoolmen themselves."

Dr. Chapin, an authority in the Protestant Episcopal Church, declares that "the records of ordinations in the English Church from December 15, 1661, to 1705, 'are either lost or destroyed.'" Thus making "an utter blank in the records of ordination for forty-four years." And an able writer in America justly adds, after giving a full account of the ordinations of Seabury and Claggett, "It is perfectly manifest that there is not a minister to-day in the Protestant Episcopal Church who

has the ordination which the canon law of the Church demands."

Bishop Stillingfleet claims that the records of British succession are destroyed. While *Dr. Wharton* and *Dr. Barrow* acknowledge the Roman succession to be untenable. Says *Bishop Stillingfleet:* "At Alexandria, where the succession runs clearest, the origin of the power is imputed to the choice of presbyters and to no divine institution."

Bishop Grove says: "The doctrine of uninterrupted succession is false." And *Dean Comber* "expresses his doubts as to the possibility of tracing up the succession with any certainty."

A Protestant Episcopal clergyman, *Dr. Richard Newton*, writes concerning the "apostolic" claim of his own Church as it unchurches other communions: "The man who can maintain it might as well stand forth at noon to-day and declare that there is no sun in the firmament, or walk out under night's sparkling canopy and deny that there are any stars in the sky. And when this position is affirmed by members of one of the smallest Protestant bodies in the land, there is a degree of *arrogant assumption* about it that admits of no defense. Nay, more, it seems to be a position that is justly chargeable in the sight of God with grievous sin. It approaches very near to the position which the Pharisees occupied in our Lord's day, when he charged upon them the sin against the Holy Ghost."

Archbishop Usher, "a divine who had read all the fathers, whom the University of Oxford in convocation styled 'the most skilled in primitive antiquity, the unanswerable defender of the orthodox religion,' when King Charles I. asked him at the Isle of Wight wherever he found in antiquity that presbyters alone ordained any, replied, 'I can show your majesty more, even where presbyters alone successively or-

dained bishops,' and instanced in Hierome's words (Epistle *ad Evagrium*) of the presbyters of Alexandria choosing and making their own bishops from the days of Mark till Heraclius and Dionysius." The same *Archbishop Usher* also says: "A presbyter hath the same order in specie with the bishop: *ergo*, the bishop hath equal intrinsic power to give orders, and is equal to him in the power of order."

Lingard, one of the best English historians, says: "Nothing certain is known concerning the first promulgation of the Gospel in Roman Britain. The apostolic establishment by St. Paul has not the slightest historical ground. According to their own authorities, the English bishops and archbishops have the following record: 'From A.D. 596 to 1533 (the date of Cranmer's consecration) fourteen archbishops of Canterbury were consecrated immediately by the popes, and many of these popes the bloodiest and most cruel monsters that ever cursed the world. From Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, to Cranmer, there were sixty-seven incumbents of that see. As noticed above, fourteen of these were consecrated immediately by the popes, three by cardinals of the Romish Church, and all the rest by men who had themselves received popish ordination. Thus the very line of bishops through whom this succession must be traced were themselves ordained by the ecclesiastical body which the Church of England in her homilies designates 'a foul, filthy, old,' etc. . . . There was not an ordained man in the English Church from Augustine to Cranmer—for nine hundred and thirty-seven years—who did not receive his ordination direct from the papacy. Thomas Cranmer, father of the Liturgy and Articles of Religion of the Church of England, and from whom every preacher in the Protestant Episcopal Church has his ordination, was himself consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury by the authority of the

popes, and after the most submissive and cordial recognition of the pope's supremacy."

A trustworthy authority says: "Presbyters consecrated patriarchs in the Church of Alexandria for two centuries after the apostles. On this ground, when English bishops refused to ordain his preachers, John Wesley, in conjunction with two other English episcopally ordained clergymen, consecrated Dr. Coke to establish the Methodist Church in this land, and to consecrate and ordain bishops and presbyters. The custom of the Church of Alexandria has ample testimony. The Methodist communion can as rightfully claim an apostolic ministry as the Protestant Episcopal Church, unless we consent to throw the Church of Alexandria overboard, the most learned, efficient, and influential of all the primitive Churches. The letters of Charles Wesley prove conclusively that his brother intended to confer episcopal authority in its usual acceptation."

The same scholarly author avers that in the primitive patriarchal Church of Alexandria down to the time of the Council of Nice, the presbyters alone laid hands in the ordination of bishops, as Willet, Usher, Stillingfleet, Goode, Litton, Riddle, Stanley, Harrison, Lightfoot, Jacob, Mossman, and Garrat among standard Episcopal writers charge; and among ancient authors Jerome, Hilary, Eutychius, Severus, Elmacinus, Amalarius, and Morinus testify.

Lord Macaulay says: "Even if it were possible, which it assuredly is not, to prove that the Church had the apostolic orders in the third century, it would be impossible to prove that those orders were not in the twelfth century so far lost that no ecclesiastic could be certain of the legitimate descent of his own spiritual character. And if this were so, no subsequent precautions could repair the evil. . . . We see no satisfactory proof of the fact that the Church of England possesses the

apostolic succession. . . . What evidence, then, have we for the fact of the apostolical succession? And here we may easily defend the truth against Oxford with the same arguments with which, in the old times, the truth was defended by Oxford against Rome."

On the impossibility of tracing this succession Lord Macaulay speaks as follows: "The transmission of orders from the apostles to an English clergyman of the present day must have been through a great number of intermediate persons. Now it is probable that no clergyman of the Church of England can trace up his spiritual genealogy from bishop to bishop, even so far back as the time of the Reformation. There remain fifteen or sixteen hundred years during which the history of the transmission is buried in utter darkness. And whether he be a priest by succession from the apostles depends on the question whether, during that long period, some thousands of events took place, any one of which may, without any great improbability, be supposed not to have taken place. We have not a tittle of evidence to any one of these events. We do not even know the names of the countries of the men to whom it is taken for granted these events happened. Whether a clergyman of the Church of England is really a successor of the apostles depends on an immense number of contingencies such as these: Whether under King Ethelwolf a stupid priest might not, while baptizing several scores of Danish prisoners who had just made their option between the font and the gallows, inadvertently omit to perform the rite on one of these graceless proselytes? Whether in the seventh century an impostor, who had never received consecration, might not pass himself off for a bishop on some rude tribe of Scots? Whether a lad of twelve did really, by a ceremony huddled over when he was too drunk to know what he was about, confer the episcopal

office on a lad of ten? It is as impossible for a minister of our day to prove that he is in direct succession, as to prove that he has lineally descended from Ahab and Jezebel. And if it could be made out, in the language of Hooker, 'there may be just and sufficient reasons to allow ordination to be made without a bishop.'"

Dr. G. A. Jacob, of the Church of England, says: "What forms an *absolutely conclusive refutation of this dogma* is the following consideration: The succession of the Jewish priests was distinctly laid down by Divine authority from the beginning; and reiterated commands, enforced by the severest judgments, emphatically declared that no one who was not of the seed of Aaron might officiate at the altar of God. Nothing but a Divine command expressly given could ever make such a regulation imperatively exclusive. Nothing but a direct and positive ordinance of the New Testament could justify the assertion of such a doctrine now. *But in the Christian dispensation no such command was ever given; nor is there in the New Testament the slightest intimation, much less an authoritative announcement, that such an apostolic succession is the only source of lawful ministerial authority. The subject, in fact, is not once mentioned or alluded to in the Christian Scriptures; nor are the apostles ever shown to have themselves received, or to have given to others, any such power as this dogma asserts to have been transmitted.*"

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